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VIZIRS

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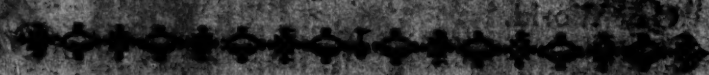


T H E

VIZIRS:

THE ENGLISH BEAR ASSAULTER:
AND THE HISTORY OF THE
ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.



V O L I

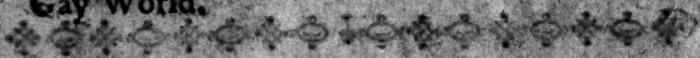
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I H T

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Gay World.



A J O V

T H E
V I Z I R S :
O R, T H E
ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.
AN ORIENTAL TALE.

By MAD^E. FAUQUES DE VAUCLUSE.

V O L. I.



L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR C. RILEY, BOOKSELLER,
AT STERNE'S-HEAD, CURZON-STREET,
MAY-FAIR. 1774.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM
LONDON
PRINTED BY
JOHN JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD
1847

(22)

I Hope the following historical explanation will be agreeable to those of my readers who are not conversant with the Persian authors. I have taken it from D'HERBELOT, and from the introduction to the history of Nader Shah.

Volume the First.

Page 1. Lohorab was the fourth king of the Caianian family, which is accounted to be the second dynasty of Persian monarchs. It seems that he has been

been little known by the *Europeans*, which must be ascribed to his peaceful disposition, and to the retired life he led in the most Eastern part of his immense kingdom.

Page 5. Kaikhosru is *Cyrus the Great*, so well known by the *Holy writings*, and by the *Greek history*.

Page 6. Locman has been confounded with *Æsop*, *Pitpay*, and almost with all the wise and just men of many ages, in which he is supposed to have miraculously lived. To him the *Persians* ascribe a dream like that of *Solomon*, and believe that he obtained riches and grandeur for having

having chosen wisdom. They also assert, that he was intimately connected with the Genii, whom they looked upon as intermediary beings between God and men; and a common saying among them was, *Who can pretend to instruct Eteman?*

Page 9. Herat is the *Aria* of the Greeks; and the province of Khorassan, of which that city is the metropolis, is called by them *Bactriana*. Yemen is the part of Arabia which we call *the happy*.

Page 11. Every body knows that a *Garavenlerai* is a public inn where the travellers are entertained gratis.

Page 63. *Zeraster* is called *Zerdusht* by the Asiatics, and reputed by them the most famous magician that these fabulous ages ever produced. We know him as the chief of an impious sect, and consequently as an impostor. He taught the adoration of the sun, and built temples where a perpetual fire was kept burning on an elevated altar, and worshipped as the purest emanation of the celestial luminary.

Page 95. The city of *Schiraz* is renowned for the excellent wine, which its fruitful territory produces; and is accounted one of the finest cities in the province of *Perfis*.

(5)
Page 147. The large and beautiful kingdom of Turan, called by the *Greeks*, *Sogdiana*, belonged formerly to the empire of Persia, but was separated from it by the king Feridun, who divided his vast dominions between his sons. This division had been a source of perpetual dissensions between the *Iranians* and *Turanians*, who had taken their names from their kings *Irage* and *Tur*, and whose reciprocal hatred was the more inveterate for having been engrafted upon an intimate and long connection.

Page 149. The river *Gihon* is the ancient *Oxus*, sometimes called *Bactrus* by the *Greeks*.

Page

Page 153. In the territory of Zamin
the finest manna in Asia is gathered.

Page 186. The Nurouz is the New-
Year's Day of the Persians, which is so-
lemnized when the sun enters the ram :
Gemshid, the fourth king of the first race
called the Pishdadian, instituted this festi-
val when he introduced the use of the so-
lar year in his empire.

Page 189. The river Gihon is the
ancient Gihon, sometimes called Bahr

by the Greeks.

to discourse on the titles of
and will imagination; while those of
T H R
a gay and more airy cast will open
the work with eagerness, and care
P R E F A C E.
to long as it affords them a temporary

IT is generally thought so easy and
insignificant a task, to write a tale
or a romance, that many of my
readers will be surprised to see a
preface at the head of this work.

Those of a grave and solemn turn
will condemn the performance, from
its very title, and call it an abuse of
VOL. I. a reason

reason to discourse on the fallies of a wild imagination; while those of a gayer and more airy cast will open the work with eagerness, and care but little for its design or execution, so long as it affords them a temporary amusement.

These two kinds of censors require an answer; and a preface is, therefore, necessary, in order to obviate their objections.

The first sort must not so far despise the flights of imagination, as wholly to seclude them from the exercise

PREFACE.

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ercise of reason; since those two faculties are so nearly allied, that fancy without judgment is capricious and irregular, and judgment without fancy is confined to very narrow bounds. As to the critics of the second class, if they value gems for nothing but the metal in which they are set, and mistake every thing for a mere toy, which is not recommended by the elegance of the workmanship; I would advise them to seek amusement elsewhere: this casket holds not jewels to their taste.

How far I am intitled to say this, let those determine, in whom good sense and good nature are happily united, and who have consequently a right to set a value on works of genius: they will, perhaps, allow me to boast that I have avoided the rocks, on which the writers of tales and novels are so frequently shipwrecked.

There are some, who are satisfied with heaping together a number of brilliant images, incredible events, enchantments, and prodigies; where the meaning, if there be any, is concealed

PREFACE.

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cealed under a superfluity of words. The authors of such performances deserve to be pitied, and are only offensive in proportion to the price we set upon our time.

As to those who have no other view than to initiate their readers in the dangerous mysteries of the passions, a slight attention to the amiableness of social virtues, the general benefit of laws, and the happiness of mankind, will be sufficient to fill us with horror at the thought of such poisonous productions.

But there are some errors, into which writers of fine parts and good intentions have often fallen; and these, since an early experience discovered them to me, I have carefully endeavoured to avoid.

As a youthful mind is chiefly captivated with the marvellous, and cannot relish the severity of historical truth, I had read the romances of *Calprenede* and *Scudery*, before I could bring myself to open *Curtius* or *Livy*; and the charms of fiction had so biaſſed my judgment, that, when I
peruſed

P R E F A C E.

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perused those historians, I accused them, in every page, of representing their heroes in the false light in which their own inclinations had seen them. I thought *Curtius* a rash Barbarian, for making *Alexander* run blindly through so many dangers, for the pretended glory of subduing the world; when I was sure he had been led to his fatal atchievements by the irresistible power of love; I wondered at the unpolished severity of *Livy*, who could have transformed the sweet-natured and gallant *Brutus* into a rigid Stoic, and a furious patriot.

It was the work of many years to make me reverse the sentence I had passed, and to find that the author of a romance, who draws from the source of historical truth, must not be allowed to disfigure his originals by painting them in the colours of his own fancy; this being the privilege of those who create their own heroes, and may consequently use them as they please.

But if an extensive licence be granted to the writers of tales, they ought not to abuse it in a point far

more

more essential than the misrepresentation of characters: They must be very sparing in the machinery of supernatural beings; and not perpetually have recourse to it, in order to extricate their heroes, or rather *themselves*, from all difficulties, which defeats the moral end of such performances; as it discourages virtue, excuses vice, and lulls prudence asleep.

The human mind is led by its natural temper to the regions of invisible powers, and wants no inducement to believe in chimeras, and fictions, till reason has directed it in the path
ton of

of truth. Thence it may happen, that a young person, who doubts not of the existence of fairies and genii, waits for their interposition on the most trifling accidents, and runs into the danger, which a little caution might have prevented; expecting supernatural gifts instead of taking pains to acquire good qualities, and even when the age of credulity is past, the bent to error and indolence remains.

As to those whose judgment is ripened by years; though they are freed from these dangers, they are not benefited by such works; for they cannot

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not set a value upon good or bad actions, which have been performed by involuntary impulses, and will not take the trouble of searching for the secret meaning of the author in a maze of unnatural fictions.

These considerations induced me to lay the foundation of this work upon truth, and to raise it within the compass of probability; for tho' I sometimes keep up the appearance of the marvellous, yet I destroy it in the sequel, and prove that it is the fault of those who view natural things in a false

false light, if so many absurdities are transmitted to posterity.

I have strictly preserved the characters of the persons whom I have introduced as they are represented by the Persian writers, quoted by M.

D'Herbelot, in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*. The customs of these early times were more favourable to my design, than such as are now observed by the Asiatics; for the women were not then banished from society, as they have been since Mahomet established amongst them the plurality of wives, and by giving

P R E F A C E. LXXIX

ing a rise to Seraglios and jealousy, has proved that an useless accumulation of treasures creates nothing but cares and avarice.

By Locman, and Zeroaster, whom the eastern traditions place in the same age, I intended to supply the operations of good and bad genii, without falling into the inconveniencies above mentioned: as a wise and benevolent man, a learned and malignant one, may fill the places allotted to those beings without having the tyrannical influence by which merit is excluded.

Giamasb,

xxviii P R E F A C E.

Giamasb, the bad Vizir, has really existed, and his miscarriages are matter of fact;—as to Saheb, and his excellent qualities, I must confess that they are entirely of my own invention; but I hope the character of a good *Vizir*, will not be thought the most improbable part of my story.

I must request the indulgence of my readers for this my first attempt to write in the *English* tongue; and if, in some parts of my work, I have deviated from that simplicity, which forms the chief beauty of the language,

P R E F A C E. xix

guage, let it be remembered, that the oriental style, which I profess to imitate, cannot subsist without continual metaphors and allegories,

T H E

guess, let it be remembered, that
the oriental style, which I profess to
imitate, cannot imitate without con-
vivial metaphors and allegories.

king, on whom were bestowed the greatest
of blessings of heaven. His reign was a
series of prosperities. Peace spread her
wings over the whole extent of his do-
minions; his subjects loved and respected
him, and his posterity who has not a
virtuous than beautiful, he had two sons,
the glory of the age, and the pride of
O R,

THE ENCHANTED LABYRINTH.

LOHORASB, king of Persia, who,
after his abdication of the crown, was
furnamed the Royal Solitary, is celebrated

by the Persian writers as a most excellent king, on whom were bestowed the greatest blessings of heaven. His reign was a series of prosperity; Peace spread her wings over the whole extent of his dominions; his subjects loved and respected him; and by his queen, who was no less virtuous than beautiful, he had two sons, the glory of the age, and the pride of his life.

These two princes, whose names were Kishtasb and Zerir, being endued with the best gifts of nature, and having received the choicest accomplishments of education, shone forth in the court of Herat, as the rising and fortunate stars of Asia; but at the summit of grandeur,

and

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 3

and in the career of delights, their youthful hearts were oppressed by the heavy hand of a secret sorrow, the weight of which was long only confided to their mutual friendship ; though at last it was explored by the piercing eyes of maternal love.

One day Kishtasb and Zerir being in the queen's garden, this tender mother entered the bower whither they had retired ; and sitting by them, with the mild rays of compassion in her looks, thus addressed them :

“ I know too well the cause of your grief, my dearest sons ; — the apparent preference which your father

B 2

gives

gives to Giamasb, and Cobad, is the more felt by your tender hearts, since the merits of these princes, compared with your accomplishments, are like a shadow compared with light. However, this partiality that seems so unnatural deserves your respect; because its source is justice.

“ I perceive, by your surprise, that you have hitherto heard no sounds but those of flattery; it is now time to listen to the voice of truth,---attend and be instructed.

“ The kingdom of Persia should have been the inheritance of your cousins, if, in reality, the rights of kings depended not on the choice of their people; for by
that

that choice Lohorasb was raised to the throne at the death of his brother. The dying Kaitkosrou, enlightened by the approach of his admission to eternal splendour, foresaw the elevation of Lohorasb, and entreated him to shew a paternal love to his children, as a compensation for the empire.

“This is the ground of that affection which the king has always shewn for Gi-amasb, and Cobad; for he who is not aware of the limits prescribed to every virtue, may easily be misguided. Such an error, however, is but like a small cloud in a bright sky; and you ought to rejoice in the glory of your father, instead

of afflicting yourselves for his only fault, which happily falls upon you alone. But, if your fortitude is unequal to that task, follow, at least, the advice which Heaven inspires me to give you.

“Take the staff of a firm resolution, and direct your steps towards the Enchanted Labyrinth, which the genii have planted at the request of the famous Locman : there you will find that celebrated sage to whom the Almighty has granted a wisdom respected even by the spiritual substances ; and a power that Nature herself obeys. Make yourselves worthy of his protection, and he will either remove the bitterness from the cup of your life,

or

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 7

or mix it with the sweets of his favour
and counsels.

“ In the mean time, your absence will
rekindle paternal love: — if a mistaken
rectitude has covered it with the ashes of
indifference, the breezes of anxiety for
your welfare will soon raise it to a flame.
Conceal the design of your journey; you
do not want a retinue, your tender union,
and your virtue are a stronger and better
guard. I alone shall remain exposed to
the shafts of affliction, which, however,
I shall endeavour to repel by the thought
of your future happiness.

The ideas of a man who knows only his own country, are confined to a very narrow sphere, but being extended in the many parts of this vast universe, they gather the knowledge that enlarges and perfects the mind. He that has never travelled, is like a diamond rough from the mine, which, though of an internal brightness, is still but uncouth to the sight, and to which, a foreign polish alone can give a lustre."

The princes having respectfully thanked the queen, and received from her a tender blessing, went back to their palace, in order to prepare for their departure. The next morning, being provided with

jewels

jewels of an immense value, they mounted two excellent horses, and quitted the city of Herat.

Their journey was happy; the cheerful conversation of friendship, like the temperate sun of the spring, disperses the clouds of tediousness. The variety of objects was to them an inexhaustable source of reflexion, and while the different turns of their mind gave to their arguments an agreeable warmth, their sincere affection kept the fire of dispute in its due bounds.

As Kishtasb and Zerir approached to that delightful part of Yemen, where

Locman resided, they were overtaken by a violent storm in the midst of a thick forest, and the night succeeding, they found themselves bewildered in darkness. Kishtasb, spent with fatigue, would have waited the return of the day, but the intreaties of Zerir, impatient of delay, prevailed with him to pursue his journey.

Soon after they were entangled in a path so narrow, that they were obliged to dismount; thus, having recommended their faithful steeds to providence, they went on undaunted, notwithstanding the hissings of serpents, the shrieks of hyenas, and the concussion of the trembling earth; encouraging and supporting each other
with

with the voice of affection, and the helping hand of tender care.

Thro' these various difficulties and distresses, the young princes forced their way, and at last espied a light, which conducted them to a magnificent caravan-serai, illuminated with a thousand flambeaux, and on the frontispiece of which were written these words: *Neither fatigues nor dangers are insurmountable to brotherly love.*

Kishtasb and Zerir equally surprised and elated by a sentence so well adapted to their situation, knocked, without hesitation, at the door of the caravan-serai, which was immediately opened.

Many

Many slaves of each sex received and introduced them to a man of a most majestic aspect, who accosted them thus;

“Princes, you are welcome to this house, consecrated to activity and courage, and the asylum of those who have given proofs of these virtues.

“If you had stayed in the forest till the return of the morning, you would have suffered more evils in that fearful inactivity, than by overcoming the difficulties which surrounded you; and would have been deprived not only of the comforts this house will afford you, but also of the instructions necessary to render the trial of the labyrinth useful. However, as
human

human nature wants repose after toils, retire to the place where refreshments are provided for you. In the mean time I will entertain a princess, who, surmounting the weakness of her sex, has shewn no less fortitude than yourselves."

The curiosity of Zerir being excited by these last words, he was unwilling to lose the opportunity of satisfying it; Kishtasb, who perceived in his eyes the indiscreet request that was already upon his lips, took him by the arm, and they were conducted to their destined apartment.

Two hours after, they returned to their indulgent host, who having made them

them sit by him upon a sofa, addressed them in the following manner:

“Know, princes, that at the rising of the sun, you will appear in the presence of Loc-man. Know also, that, at the same time, the labyrinth shall open for the annual trial destined to those who come to consult the sage; but before he admits them to it, he exacts a sincere account of their lives and sentiments.

“It behoves you then to consider within yourselves, whether you have any reasons which may oppose that sincerity. By the trial of the labyrinth, the least falsity is discovered, and punished with a public shame. Those who are ignorant of this,
and

and have not reflected that the darkness of guile must not approach the piercing beams of penetration, in endeavouring to deceive the sage, deceive themselves.

“ That most excellent of human beings, in order to prevent the evil consequences of a mistaken goodness, has taken this wonderful course ; for though myriads of celestial intelligences attend him, he has not always the gift of knowing the recesses of the heart ; the Power who is alone *omniscient*, grants that gift to his purest creatures, only on particular occasions ; and even sometimes allows *them* to obtain it by successful experiments :

Thus,

Thus, if your tongue be directed by truth, you will exult, when, returning from the labyrinth, you shall bring with you the confirmation of your words, and acquire the protection of the sage. Profit by this advice, which you have deserved by your constancy in the road that conducts to this house, and be attentive to the instructions given to all those who are admitted to the trial.

“The labyrinth is composed of as many alleys, and intricate windings as there are flowers destined to its purpose, and each alley is bordered on both sides by the same kind of flowers. At the entrance of the labyrinth you will be presented

and I

with

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 17

with an enamelled basket, on the cover of which an hieroglyphical mark is engraved. Into that basket you must put the flowers, which you are to gather in the following order.

“When you enter an alley, you must take a flower on your right hand, and place it in the basket, otherwise you will never find the issue of that alley. Sometimes a single flower is not sufficient to extricate you from it; therefore, when you see that you tread again the same twisted path, you ought to gather a second flower on your left, and immediately you will pass into another alley, where you must follow the same method; and thus proceed

ceed successively till you arrive at a grove consecrated to Truth.

“The beautiful youths, who are the guardians of that holy place, will take your basket, and let you wander in that maze of delights till the trial is ended, and all those to whom it has been permitted, are assembled.

“No farther difficulties will remain:— you will be led out of the labyrinth by a range of lofty trees, ornamented with many statues, representing amongst the persons who have been before admitted into the labyrinth, those that have distinguished themselves

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 119

(themselves by their virtues,) or whose lives furnish an interesting instruction for mankind.

“The wise Locman will receive and open your basket, and by the flowers it contains, will know what judgement to pass upon you. As to the secret of the labyrinth, I am not permitted to disclose it; the benevolent sage himself alone grants that favour to those who are found to deserve it.”

“In this, and in any thing else, said Zerir, we ought to submit to his will; but vouchsafe to tell me, if the princes, whom you have mentioned, will be in the grove of Truth.”

“He

“He (answered the venerable man) who seeks happiness in its only path, the path of virtue, ought to resist the first assault of a turbulent passion.”

At this just reprimand, the cheeks of Zerir were spread with conscious blushes; when suddenly the sound of drums and trumpets proclaiming the opening of the labyrinth, he hastened with his brother to the palace of Locman.

The sage received the two princes favourably, for the innocence of their lives was strongly expressed in the serenity of their countenance, and in the simplicity of their words. They had not, indeed, yet

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yet experienced the power of passions, and that power alone diverts mankind first from the path of righteousness, and soon after from that of sincerity; therefore as the passions had not yet arrived to maturity in their youthful hearts, they gathered nothing but buds in the alleys of the labyrinth.

The various beauties of that enchanted place did not engross all the thoughts of Zerir: with a hasty pace he advanced towards the grove of truth, in which he flattered himself to meet the princess who had kindled the fire of curiosity in his mind; but he had only part of the satisfaction he expected. A majestic, and

and graceful form, an easy shape, and a beautiful hand were all the charms he could admire in that princess. Her face was covered by a veil of gauze wrought with silver, the brightness of which dazzled the eyes of the beholders.

The name of *Perisadeh*,* written upon her basket, might have supplied whatever was concealed from the sight, if the adulation usually paid to the great had not rendered doubtful that testimony of her beauty. However, this reflexion occurred not to the mind of *Zerir*; he trusted implicitly to his desires, and his heart was agitated by the most pleasing expectations.

If

* From the *Peris*, a beautiful race of good Genii.

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 23

If imagination has often the power of lending charms to objects entirely destitute of them, how is that power enforced when the reality of those charms may justly be supposed! Its most lively pencil was employed in tracing in the mind of Zerir the form of an accomplished beauty. But the sudden and ardent love of that prince was not altogether founded upon a chimerical idea; by a conversation with the princess Perisadeh, he discovered in her these perfections of the mind, which establish love upon a basis that ought never to be shaken; and before he quitted the labyrinth, he had all the excuses which a violent passion can pretend to.

Though

Though Locman, being devoted to solitude and philosophy, contemned the pride of riches, as he had consecrated a part of his life to the benefit of mankind, he thought himself obliged to display his magnificence, in order to attract the eyes of the multitude, and, by raising their admiration, to gain their hearts.

He was seated on a throne of gold adorned with precious gems; his mantle was white as the purest snow; and in his venerable countenance, majesty and benevolence were happily blended. A thousand youths, whom the Persian writers have taken for so many genii, surrounded him; their waving robes had the variety
of

of colours that the rainbow displays, their faces were like the full moon, and their floating locks spread the delicious perfumes of Arabia.

The sage having opened the enamelled baskets, Zerir saw with no small surprise, that the flowers which he had gathered only in the bud, were expanded in perfect bloom. He directed instantly his anxious looks to the basket of Perisadeh, seeking to draw a favourable omen from the sympathy of their taste, or from the conformity of their fate. His satisfaction was great in seeing that most of the flowers she had gathered were of the same kind as his own, but it would have been

much enhanced by the knowledge of their mysterious opening.

Locman examined the baskets, and having by the kind, the colours, and the aspect of the different flowers, received the necessary instructions, he then turned to Zerir and Kifhtash, and said; "Princes, your tender age would render of little use most of the counsels I might give you; experience is the true guide of mankind, reason is only its attendant. The skilful gardener never lops the branches of his trees when they are yet tender sprigs; he waits till the influence of the seasons enables them to receive a form suitable to the decoration of the garden, and only

then

ENCHANTED LABYRINTH. 27

then reaps the benefits of his first cultivation. Therefore, it is now sufficient to warn you, that Zerir will not be happy till he shall possess one of the most necessary qualities of the soul, the seed of which is perhaps only concealed in his heart; and Kishtasb shall suffer a series of calamities, till instructed by them he confesses a defect, to which self-love gives a specious, but false appellation.

“As to the princess Perisadeh, she will not attain the felicity which the excellence of her mind deserves, till she has corrected the excess of one of her many virtues.

“When by some spontaneous actions you prove yourselves such as I desire you to be, on these three points, the fortune of your life will be fixed, and we shall meet again in this palace, of which I will explain the wonders, as an assurance of my favour. However, you may even now form a wish, and if worthy of you and me, I trust it will be granted.”

At these words Zerir was tempted to ask to be loved by Perisadeh; but instantly recollecting himself, he blushed at the humiliation to which a man would be reduced by the want of a supernatural aid, in a case wholly depending on merit. As a consciousness of our own real worth

often

often leads us to the best determination, Zerir wished to have a vizir endued with wisdom and virtue, when after a long and happy life, the king his father should leave to him the weight of government; being sure to acquire, with that fortunate help, the most just, and most flattering title to the love and the respect of his subjects.

Kishtasb, whose sentiments had less delicacy than those of his brother, asked to be united to some princess equally beautiful and virtuous, without the trouble of obtaining that happiness with uneasy expectations.

The demand of Perisadeh, pronounced with the timid voice of modesty, was, to love a deserving object with all the ardour and constancy of a noble and elevated soul: That wish, so well adapted to the sublime sentiments of the sage, was approved by him; and the desires of the princes were also favourably heard.

When the trial of the labyrinth was ended, Locman invited his illustrious guests to a most surprising and magnificent entertainment. The thousand youths, who watched his nod, displayed all those wonders of nature, those secrets, arts, and science, which the indefatigable industry of mankind has successively discovered.

They

They exhibited the marvellous effects of electricity, and the bright scintillations of the now destructive nitre. The waters borrowing the notes of the inhabitants of the air, and the birds the voice of man, passed through each mode of music since adopted by the different taste of nations, and re-united the lively and pleasing, the bold and majestic, the soft and affecting, in order to form the most ravishing concert. On a theatre, decorated with equal elegance and grandeur, the beautiful youths represented both a tragic and comic performance, and shewed in both the possibility of joining a profound knowledge of the passions, and a

delicate touch of sentiment with the agreeable flights of imagination.

These prodigies, which charmed Kishrafb, could not fix the attention of Zerir, but when they were associated to the works of his fancy. To the supposed beams of the concealed eyes of Perisadeh, he thought the artificial flames grew pale; the fire which he felt in his veins at the touch of her robe, seemed to him the true electrical fire; her voice was to his ears the sole melody; he found elegance and wit only in her words. Sometimes, indeed, he recollected the tribute of admiration and praise he owed to Locman, but it was then only when the princess retired

retired to take some refreshment, of which her veil deprived her in public; and on her return he forgot again the world and himself.

The night was far advanced, when the princes were conducted to the most delicious asylum of repose: there Zérir, reclined upon his couch, and in the agitation of new-born love, began to review the scenes which had just passed before him.

The wish of Perisadeh first presented itself to his mind. "Ah! said he, my princess has seen all the fire of love in my eyes, and she desires to love! yet with-

out doubt she does not think me worthy of that lively affection she wishes to feel for a deserving object!—but why this tormenting surmise? if her envious veil has concealed her heavenly looks, then were not the tender inflexions of her voice, when directed to me, her sighs, which answered to mine, the most favourable omens; the flame she breathed was united with the flame that burns in my heart, as a being of the same nature; and nothing but the innate modesty of her sex has made my happiness doubtful. Her very request to the sage ought to raise rather than depress my hopes; a true lover never thinks that he loves enough; by that symptom, she loves; and

and by the charms which have rendered her worthy to bear the name of the most beautiful intelligences, she deserves to be beloved.

"Flattering ideas deceive me not ! to-morrow I will know my fate. But alas ! who can give me the assurance that to-morrow will relieve my anxieties ? In the intoxication of my senses, I have overlooked every future prospect. Shall I see again that bright star of my life ! shall I recover the means I have neglected of enquiring in what happy climate she usually shines forth. Yes, the benevolent Locman will befriend me, his goodness will

will not permit him to let his guest depart in despair."

This last thought recalled peace to the mind of the enamoured prince; sleep followed that amiable forerunner of its sweets, but in closing his eyes could not take possession of his soul, for dreams, its attendants, submitted to his amorous fancies.

That happy interval was necessary to the unfortunate lover, against whom the sage had directed the bow of anxious uncertainty; well knowing that youth must be led by unsatisfied passions, and a course of self-denial, to wisdom and to greatness.

The

The gates of the east were scarcely opened for the bright luminary of the world to renew his course, when Zerir called the slaves by whom he had been attended, and asked them whether the princess Perisadeh could be seen, and whether he was permitted to present his respects to the sage.

“Our excellent lord, answered one of them, has left this palace, whither he will not return till the next year. He has ordered us to attend you if you will remain here; or to present you with two of his best horses, if you desire to go back to the court of your father, whose tendernefs for you has been awakened by
your

your absence, and who most ardently wishes for your return."

"And the princess? exclaimed Zerir."

"She has quitted this place at the first dawning of the morning," returned the slave.

At these words, Zerir, overpowered by grief, fell back upon the sofa.

"What road has Perisadeh taken? said Kishtasb, name the country where she reigns?"

"I cannot answer your questions; replied the slave coldly; we are destined

serve the guests of our lords in their real wants, but not in their needless and indiscreet curiosity."

"Insulting wretch! cried Zerir, rising in a transport of rage, and drawing his scymitar; wert thou protected by thousands of genii, wert thou one thyself, thou shouldst not escape the punishment prepared for thy insolence, if thou tellest me not instantly where I can find the princess Perisadeh."

Kishtasb, amazed at the rashness of his brother, stopped his hand, whilst the slave retiring some paces from the prince, and assuming a haughty look, said;

"I will

“I will hasten to the princess Perisadeh, in order to warn her against so furious a lover.” At these words he fled from the palace.

The exasperated Zerir determined to prevent the effects of these threats, and being in hopes to trace by the steps of the slave the road which the princess had taken, he mounted the first horse that was offered to him, and was followed by Kishtab.

The princes rode two days and two nights after the fugitive, who ran before them swifter than the wind itself; till, at last,

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last, their steeds, overcome with hunger and fatigue, dropped down dead in the midst of a dismal wilderness.

This accident having deprived Zerir of his last hopes; his hitherto undaunted mind could not support any more his exhausted spirits, and he remained, in all appearance, lifeless on the sand.

At this sight, Kishtasb felt inexpressible anguish, as he could not afford any help to so dear a brother, whose pale cheeks he bathed with tender tears. At last Zerir opened his eyes clouded with despair; and in a trembling and low voice said:

“O cruel

"O cruel Locman! I went in search of you in order to find happiness, and I have found a source of misery!"

"Do not, my friend, cried Kishtasb, do not judge so rashly; the bar that opposes our desires is not always what our passions feels it. The benevolence of the sage is universally known; could he be cruel only to us? surely he has ordered your separation from the princess for some wise end; perhaps to render you more worthy of her, and your re-union may depend on your courage, and the great actions that an exalted love inspires."

"No, no, replied Zerir, I cannot entertain so remote and precarious a hope."

"Indulge

"Indulge it at least, resumed Kishtab, till we have visited all the kingdoms of Asia; and let us extricate ourselves from this desert; a grave too shameful for the sons of Lohorab."

These words roused Zerir from his lethargy; but in vain he was willing to avail himself of the advice and assistance of his brother, for his strength failed him.

"Dear Kishtab, said he, I am exhausted; a devouring fire consumes me; yet, if I could but have a drop of that stream which falls from yonder rocks, my life might be preserved."

"I fly,

“ I fly, cried Kishtasb, to fetch you some of this salutary water; would to heaven I could as easily satisfy all your wishes !” In saying this, the prince directed his course by the noise of the falling torrent, and entered the cavern in which the stream was received in a large and mossy basin. There he took off his turban, in order to use it as a vase, when from the cavity of the rock, a band of robbers suddenly rushed upon him, dragged him from the cavern, and soon carried him out of the desert.

Kishtasb felt this cruel accident much less for himself than for his beloved brother, whose situation made him forget
his

his own. Many times the name of Zerir was upon his lips; many times he sought, but in vain, some sparks of pity in the eyes of the barbarous wretches to whom he was fallen a prey. At last, with many sighs, he resigned his brother to Providence, fearing to expose the liberty and perhaps the life of that unhappy prince, in giving him a momentary comfort.

Mean while, Zerir, having long waited for the return of Kishtasb, began to be alarmed; his increasing fear re-animating his courage, he rose up, went to the cavern, and there searched the recesses of the desert; making the rocks resound

resound with the name of Kishtab, and his loud complaints.

“O my only friend, cried he, where are you? this is our first separation; Heaven! how cruel! to what dangers have I exposed you? why have I suffered you to part from me? our union was our strength, some ferocious animal has found you without a brother who would have perished in your defence, and has devoured you! thus you have wanted the help you was seeking to give me! thus you have lost your life to preserve mine! but my remorse and my days shall not be long; if the entrails of some wild beast are become your tomb, I will partake

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take with you that horrible abode, as a punishment for having exposed you to the fatal consequence of an extravagant passion."

In this agony of grief and despair, Zerir passed that day and the following night, while he sometimes rushed with fury through the brambles and briars that obstructed his search, and sometimes panted for breath in the dust.

As the morning diffused its lively purple over the azure sky, Zerir heard himself loudly called. The sound revived his hopes, and, overcoming once more his weakness, he endeavoured to meet a
man,

man, whose anxious looks, and hasty paces, spoke benevolence and zeal.

"Whoever you are, cried he, whether some supernatural being, or feeble mortal as myself, say, oh! say! am I to follow my brother to the dark region of death, or must I live to enjoy the light with him."

"Live, prince, answered the unknown man; live, in order to save Kishtab; it is he himself that sent me to help you out of this dismal place; come and deliver him from vile and barbarous hands."

"Ah! exclaimed Zerir, let us fly to him; where is he? shall we arrive in time

"to

to save him? perhaps in this very moment, swift opportunity escapes us, whilst a dreadful fate overtakes him."

"Be calm, said the stranger, and instead of losing your remaining spirits by so violent an agitation, endeavour to recover your strength by a powerful elixir which I have brought you; after this necessary precaution I will answer your questions."

Zerir checked his impatience, and obeyed, afraid of offending his benefactor, who thus resumed his discourse:

“ Providence who directs our steps according to the design it has upon us, permitted that yesterday, at the setting of the sun, I lost my way, and I found myself at the entrance of a close valley, where I saw many armed men stretched on the grass-covered earth; and in a profound sleep notwithstanding the loud complaints of a captive, whose chains one of them held round his waist. Surprised, and moved at the sight, I approached, sighing, for the sake of humanity, the danger with which I was threatened by this intrusion.

“ I well remembered that if we shut not our ear to the sighs of the unfortunate,

tonate, our own sighs will be waisted on the wings of the Genli to the throne of the Almighty. I then softly said, "O you, who drink a bitter draught from the cup of affliction, take courage; and if it is not in my power to console your hearts, but by compassionate words, trust still in the powerful assistance of your Maker."

"Ah! what thanks have I not already to return him, answered Kishtab, (for it was him that I thus addressed;) he has sent you to save the life of my brother. Fly to the next wilderness; make it resound with the name of Zerir; it may be yet not too late to employ your generosity in behalf of that unhappy prince,

whilst it would be entirely useless to me. What do I say? I shall owe you all the comfort I am able to receive, if you let me hope for so dear a friend. Alas! I have left him a prey to the anguish of the soul, infinitely more acute than bodily pains. If this last blow, the loss of a beloved brother, has not struck with death his sinking heart, rouse him by the picture of the condition you see me in; tell him that Kishtasb confides in his friendship for his deliverance from the hands of these robbers, by whom he was surprised while drawing some water to quench his thirst. But do not lose the time which is so precious, leave this dangerous place; a single moment

ment may deprive you of your liberty, and me of the favourable rays of comfort your presence has made shine upon my distressed mind."

"As prudence and pity obliged me to follow the advice of Kishtab, and to grant his prayer, I whispered him the assurance of my zeal, and withdrew. I then hastened to my habitation, in order to bring this elixir, the virtue of which I judged highly necessary for you. There I have waited for the return of the day, fearing to be bewildered by darkness in this vast and pathless desert, and to deprive you, by an unseasonable eagerness, of the comfort I designed you."

“May all the choicest blessings of heaven attend your life, exclaimed Zerir; and though the true reward of virtue is virtue itself, receive also the assurance of my gratitude. But do you know the road that the robbers were to take? However, let not your answer detain us, you shall satisfy me in our way to the valley, where perhaps we shall still find my brother.”

The name of the stranger was Saheb, which signifies *friend*; his natural benevolence was deserving of that glorious name from every being in general; and soon his sagacity found out that Zerir had a particular right to the sentiment it implies.

plies. He knew that excessive passions are the tokens of an exalted mind, and the seeds of every good quality; he had seen by the brotherly love of Zerir, how much the soul of that prince was capable of noble impulses.

Zerir, on his part, had for Saheb the strong prepossession which gratitude inspires when a benefit is unexpected; but he was too much agitated to express, or even to know these rising sentiments, by which his life was to be influenced.

At last they arrived at the valley where Saheb left Kishtasb; but the robbers had quitted it without leaving any footsteps

by which they could be traced. This cruel disappointment threw Zerir into such a state of despair, that he resolved to die upon the spot which had supported the wretched body of his unhappy brother. As he was indulging his tenderness by giving many kisses to the earth yet pressed by so dear a weight, he found in the grass a *tablet* on which were wrote the following words.

“If the kind comforter whom Heaven has been pleased to send me, has found you alive, O my beloved Zerir, I know your love for me will bring you hither; know then my fate. The robbers who have surpris’d me in the cavern, judging
by

by the jewels they have found upon me, I was able to pay a great ransom, are convinced that it is their own interest to preserve my life. After some incursions into the neighbouring countries, the name of which I am ignorant of, they intend to repair to Herat. There you must follow me, and we shall meet in the arms of a tender mother."

A thousand times the impetuous Zerir pressed to his bosom these dear characters, in a rapture of joy, no less excessive than his former grief; he prepared himself to depart immediately for Herat, and bore with the utmost impatience the representations of Saheb against so precipitate a resolution.

“If you do not consider, prince, added this generous man, that your spirits, which have been supported by your violent agitation, will sink when in a situation less animating; at least, think that you owe to me your life, and the hopes that thus transport you. Is it then too much to exact some compliance to my desires for such benefits? you may reach Herat before your brother, and also acquit your debt of gratitude to me. I ask only to exercise the duty of hospitality towards you some few days. My habitation is not far from hence; there you shall enjoy the sweets of repose, after so much bitterness of troubles; there you shall find any accommodation
be-

befitting you for your journey; and a friend who will attend your footsteps with a heart satisfied by your condescension."

Zerir heard Saheb with a conscious blush, and answered:

"Your kind reproof has been to my mind like a flash of light to a darkened sky; it has pierced the mist of succeeding passions. I confess gratitude to be the first duty of man; and I leave at your disposal, not only the time you desire, but also every moment of the life you have preserved."

"The reward would too much exceed the benefit, replied Saheb; however I
accept

accept this laudable rapture of your heart,
and I shall not make a bad use of it."

The spot where Saheb's habitation was situated, seemed the retreat of smiling nature, and the repository of all her charms. The castle was elegantly built, and stood on the declivity of a hill, whose top was encircled with stately and fragrant trees. In the midst of that delightful grove, a fountain raised to the sky its silver streams, which only sprinkled, in their fall, the rose, the tulip, and the other tribes of glorious flowers, running hastily to water the humble violet which lay concealed in the grass. There the jessamine twining its white blossoms round

the

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the pomegranate, made a double crown to its ruby rows; while the honeysuckle mixed its soft hues and sweet odour with the bright gold, and delicious perfume of the orange.— There, the numerous choir of birds ravished the ear with their melodious notes, pleased the eye by their various and beautiful colours, and moved the heart by their mirthful play and tender dalliance. There, in short, each sense found its particular enjoyment.

Sahib entertained his guest with every kind of delicacy luxurious Asia affords; his manners and taste proved that he had not been always devoted to solitude. In
the

the chearfulness of evening's conversation, the prince recounted the short history of his life; and this having recalled to his mind the image of Perisadeh, Saheb, in order to prevent the danger of so affecting a remembrance, and to comfort him, launched forth in the praise of Locman.

“ It is to him, continued he, I owe my present peace and content. I have seen stormy days on the sea of troubles; I have been tossed against the rocks of vexations; but, though I do not pretend to feelings so passionate as yours, I am not without merit for my fortitude in these trials.”

“ Oh!

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“Oh! let me know them, cried Zerir; add to my obligation to you, by teaching me from example how to support the evils of life.”

“I was descended, said Saheb, from a noble family, and I received the most happy education, since the wise Locman took the care of my early years. At a proper time he ordered me to travel, but my first journey would have proved fatal to me, if his instructions had not been a guard to my heart.

“When I had passed the gulf, and entered into the vast empire of Iran,* I found the reputation of Zoroaster spread abroad through the country. A strong desire to know

* Now called Persia.

know and to refute that rising impostor took possession of my heart. Youthful zeal is assuming and imprudent, my presumption was rewarded by the shame it deserved.

“Zoroaster, who sought to propagate superstition, could not but be an enemy to reason, and therefore hated Locman. He was elated with the thought of transplanting into the moving sand of error, a plant which the sage had cultivated in the firm ground of truth; he then distinguished me from all those who courted his conversation, and took no small trouble to persuade me.

“This

"This preference I ascribed to my merit, and insensibly my vanity, willing to dignify its flatterer, made me look on the deceiver as on a worthy man unjustly reviled. I examined his doctrine, or rather I thought to examine it, when, in reality, I only admired his progress, and reckoned the number of his disciples, as so many proofs of my superior abilities which attracted his most particular notice.

"Zoroaster was, like most founders of sects, versed in the knowledge of human foibles; he saw mine, and took every possible advantage of it. In short, I began to be reconciled to the ridiculous ceremonies I went to laugh at; and my
ready

ready acquiescence intitled me to the honour of being initiated before most of the pretenders to it.

“It was then that my first principles regained their original influence. We were assembled in the newly erected temple, when the light of reason, more powerful than the worshipped fire, darted into my mind. The thought of thus debasing the divinity by the madnets of mens fancies, excited my indignation; but knowing too well the danger of controversy, I retired with a contemptuous silence.

“The confusion of Zoroaster was great, though infinitely less than my own:

a nu-

a numerous croud of followers made him ample amends for my desertion, whilst for many days I was overwhelmed with shame, for having so imprudently run on the first quicksand of youth, pride and presumption:

“Not far from Herat, and in a very sultry evening, I took shelter under some palm trees, on the bank of a river. As my meditations were full of remorse, and of anxieties for the judgement that Locman would pass upon my fault, night came unnoticed. I was waiting for the rising of the moon to pursue my journey, when I *heard* the dismal voice of despair. The sky was clear, the stars shone very brightly;

brightly; I then saw near me a most beautiful woman, who after some *incoherent* exclamations, leaped into the river. I plunged in immediately to rescue her, and taking hold of her robe, brought her safe to the shore.

"She was soon recovered; as I encircled her in my arms, lest she should relapse into her rashness; she fixed her lovely eyes upon me, and said:

"What injury have I done thee, O stranger, thus to deprive me of this last asylum of peace? if thy mistaking zeal flows from humanity, know that I am the most wretched of beings. Loose me
then,

then, lest my persecutor should come and bind me with stronger chains than those I have broken. Alas! continued she, with a gentle sigh, he may also take away thy life; too great a punishment for thy ill-placed goodness!"

"From the moment I held the celestial form in my embraces, an unknown emotion had seized my heart, and choaked my utterance; but at the word *persecutor*, the power of speech returned. Where, cried I, where is the barbarian who can hurt thee, O daughter of beauty? shew me the way to him that I may sever his head from his body, and throw it at thy feet."

"I must

"I must not suffer his life to be attempted, replied she; he is my husband."

"Your husband? said I, with the voice of sorrow."

"Yes, resumed she; and though I have never offended, I receive from him an unheard and almost incredible treatment."

"Can he, said I, who has found the tenderest caresses of love returned by such excellence as you, be guilty of so much brutality?"

"I never received any caresses from Affar, answered she; but listen to the
dismal

dismal tale of the unfortunate Saphira, and let her die. My friends held an high rank at the court of Herat; I was the only fruit of their tender union, and all the wishes of their fond hearts were centered in my happiness.

"A rich and noble youth, who shone amongst his companions, with a splendor like that of the morning star, which leads the host of heaven, asked me for his wife; my parents granted his request with joy, and I submitted. We were soon to be united, when unhappily, Maana, my favourite slave, persuaded me to enjoy a most pleasing evening in a little arbour at the extremity of our garden,

There

There, rushed upon us some armed men; Affar, who was their chief, seized me, and brought me to a strong hold, situated on yonder hill.

“ He soon obtained the forced acquiescence of my parents in our marriage. For some time, the softness of his manners, and his kind behaviour, made me happy; but, on my father's being ordered to quit the country, (I know not for what offence) he took off the mask of goodness, and appeared in his natural cruelty.

“ Six times the sun has reclined his golden head on the waves, and six times
has

has raised it again, since I have seen his enlivening rays. My prison was darkness itself; an heavy chain joined me to the cold earth; a scanty nourishment was brought to me by Asfar, who seasoned it with the absynth of his words; his rage seemed to increase by my submissive patience; and at last he loaded me with opprobrious names, and cruel blows till he was glutted with my tears.

“ As I was to-day imploring the relieving hand of death, Maana has entered my dungeon, and breaking my chains, said :

Fly, wretched Saphira, and dispose of yourself according to your desire; fly,

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and

and beware of falling again into the unmerciful hands from which I deliver you."

"I was constrained to follow that advice, for I have no asylum, no friends, nor no protector."

"Surely, said I, with an inquiring look, the happy youth who had the first claim to the precious gem of your faith, is no more among the living."

"I am ignorant of his fate, resumed she; he disappeared the day I fell into the hands of his rival, Amiable Morad! if the treacherous dagger of death has cut asunder the golden thread of thy life, thou wast less unfortunate than Saphira."

"He

“He is still to be envied, exclaimed I; he lives in your heart, which learned of him the first emotion of love.”

“At these words, the cheeks of Saphira were suffused with the lively hue of a blooming rose; an expressive, though modest look, beamed hope to my ravished soul; I pressed her to my bosom with a transport too violent to be expressed; but how dreadfully our delicious and eloquent silence was interrupted! in my ecstasy I was not aware that many men were hastening to us; when Saphira struggling to disengage herself from my arms, and looking anxiously on the river, cried:

“Here is the cruel Affar; fly, and let me find a shelter from his rage in that friendly stream.” In saying these words she fainted.

“I rushed furiously on the slaves that surrounded Affar, who ordered them to spare my life, and only to disarm me. However, this last command would not have been easily executed, if the condition in which I saw Saphira had not robbed me of my presence of mind in the fight. Thus, my courage giving way to my tender fears, I was overcome by these wretches, whom I could have dispersed as the wind scatters the light dust of the mountains; thus I was brought with

with the inanimate Saphira to the castle of Affar.

"The first words that the lips of the reviving Saphira pronounced were in my behalf; she intreated for my life in the most moving accents, and made the recital of her own desperate attempt with a resolute coldness.

"Affar answered in so mild and courteous a manner, that I raised my eyes to him, and was struck with the nobleness and affability of his countenance, and the elegant beauty of his person. He, probably, saw in my surprised looks some tokens of doubt with regard to the ve-

racity of Saphira, for, having ordered his slaves to take her to her apartment, he said to me, smiling :

“ I perceive, generous stranger, that you are not yet acquainted with the Arts of women ; but the heavenly form of Saphira has deceived you more than the probability of her tale : who, unexperienced, could think that the verdant crystal of a smooth sea, can sometimes foam with fury, and threaten destruction ?

“ I know, at the expence of my peace, the propriety of that similitude ; the pride and obstinacy of Saphira are like uncontrollable waves. I have to-day justly reprimanded

primanded her, and she has fled from me in the storm of her passion, but has taken care to execute her threats with some help at hand. However, I am much indebted to you for her rescue; and I intreat you to crown that obligation by remaining some days under this hospitable roof, where you shall be entertained according to your merit, and my gratitude."

"The sincerity of youth admits not easily the thoughts of diffidence; I accepted, with transport, the offer of Affar; my love for Saphira was not abated by suspecting her of some deviation from truth; or rather I reconciled the contradiction that appeared between the account of

Affar and her own. Affar had confessed some severity, and I compared the delicate fair one to a tender flower bending, almost equally, under a slight breeze, and under a northern wind. The only part of her history in which I could not acquit her of falsehood, was in regard to the coldness of which she accused Affar; for even conviction itself could scarcely have persuaded my enamoured heart of its possibility.

“You are surprised, prince, that I thus indulged a guilty love; but it is because you do not consider that the essence of the passion of love being pure in itself, at its entrance into the soul, and yet

yet unallayed with any base mixture, has consequently nothing in it, at first, that may alarm the most watchful conscience.

“ I passed many days in that security, which was strengthened by my encreasing friendship for Affar. I never looked on him with the envious eyes of a rival, but received the continual marks of his affection with a gratitude unallayed by envy. Our conversations were entertaining, and delightful to both ; sometimes he admitted Saphira to share in them ; but though that favour was the height of my wishes, time, in her presence, rolled over my head with less serenity than when

alone with Affar. A while, I ascribed the painful emotions to my alarms for the condition in which I saw Saphira; a settled melancholy was spread over her beautiful face, the brightness of her love-inspiring eyes was often dimmed with tears; and notwithstanding the tender attentions of Affar, she seemed even more dejected than the fatal day of our first meeting.

“ Though I could not help taxing Saphira with injustice on account of the aversion she had for the amiable Affar, pity prevailed over my censure and added fuel to love. Pity and love are perhaps more congenial than any other sentiments

of

of the human heart, as being the two strongest impulses of nature, and the two first sources of our feelings.

“ Sometimes I suspected that Assar himself laboured under the influence of both these sentiments; I took as a compassion for my weakness his uncommon indulgence in permitting me to see Saphira; but then his watchful eyes and uneasy looks appeared to me the undoubted proofs of corroding jealousy. However, I had not the generosity to spare him that painful conflict by waving his condescension; my reason was to be awakened only by the utmost danger.

“ When

“When the roses of health began to mix with the lilies on the cheeks of Saphira, Affar, in testimony of his joy, gave a magnificent festival to his family and dependants.

“The tents, painted with various and lively colours, were pitched in a delightful meadow, which being surrounded by many little hills, covered with trees, preserved the freshness of its emerald-coloured grass, and the bloom of its sweet uncultivated flowers. The means of diversion were amply furnished, and the choice of them left to every one’s fancy; the women attended, and though veiled, their presence animated the gay scene.

“In

"In the tumult of universal mirth, I might have found many opportunities of revealing to Saphira the secret of my heart, if that secret had been clearly known to myself; or rather if the rights of hospitality, and the duty of friendship had not checked my involuntary raptures, and sealed my lips; but at length Saphira spoke, and my ignorance and scruples vanished."

"Saheb, said she, when night shall be in the midst of her dark career, repair to the garden, and wait for me in the grotto; and I will there confide to your generous heart a secret of the utmost importance to my peace."

"At

“ At these words, I was no more myself, I seemed to feel a new existence; all the symptoms of a violent passion broke out at once; I blushed, I trembled, my eyes brightened with the joy of hopes; my heart beat the alarm of desires; and I bowed in silence my transported acknowledgement.

“ The swift hours could not keep pace with my eager thoughts! many times I accused the sun of enviously retarding his course, in order to delay my happiness; at last that tedious day closed, happily closed by the disappointment of my guilty expectations.

“ As

“As Affar was giving orders to spread the table of private delicacy in the same grotto where I flattered myself to feast upon love, Saphira whispered to me:—

“Saheb, fate, whose decrees are ever against the wretched Saphira, has ordered that she must have to-night the unwelcome company of her tyrant, instead of the relieving conversation of a friend; but perhaps opportunity will not always thus mock my ardent wishes.”

“Whoever has seen his best grounded hopes deluded, may judge of my situation. I remained without speech and motion even long after Affar had returned,
and

and was roused only by the odious marks of his tenderness for Saphira. Then I passed from my lethargy to a rage hardly restrained by the languishing looks of Saphira, and the kind behaviour of my generous host.

“But my madness over-leaped all bounds; when the amiable pair retired to repose, I followed them some paces with my scymitar half drawn, and my heart thirsting for the blood of my new hated rival; when I thought I heard the voice of Locman thundering in my ear:”

“Whither art thou led by a shameful passion, O lost, guilty Sakeb? to murder a friendly

friendly host, because thou canst not instantly rob him of what thou thinkest his best treasure? return to the winding path of error and be deceived, rather than plunge thus with open eyes into the gulf of wickedness."

Mean while the slaves who attended

me, "Whether my revolting conscience borrowed the awful sound, or some genius sent by the sage in reality pronounced these words, I stopped, struck with terror, and fell with my face to the ground in an inexpressible agony of horror, grief, and remorse. I remained in that posture till the thought of not being too late in my repentance applied the balm of comfort to my wounded mind. I then took the resolution of departing from the castle

of Affar at the first opening of its gate, without allowing myself to pay him the duty of a gratitude I had so recently condemned.

“ Mean while, the slaves who attended me, thinking I intended to pass the night in the grotto, had retired, and the lamps were extinguished. As in the disorder of my mind, I could not direct my steps through the darkness that surrounded me, I reclined on a sofa, waiting impatiently for the return of the day.

“ It was not long before I heard some persons entering the grotto, and advancing towards me. Oh! it is Saphira, said I

to myself! who shall arm me against this new danger? must I remain concealed when Saphira seeks for me? can I fly from Saphira!

“In this conflict, the consequences of which were so uncertain, I dreaded to hear the enchanting voice of Saphira, when Maana exclaimed:

“Do not, ungrateful Assar, do not endeavour to beguile my sorrow by an apparent confidence; your soft dissembling words are like the mild and deceitful weather of the early year. On the promise of happy days I have betrayed Saphira, and the cloud of disappointment has been since my only reward.”

“How

"How unjust are your complaints, dear Maana, answered Affar, have I not heaped favours upon you! here you command and receive more respect and honours than Saphira."

"Love is the only reward of love, replied Maana; but your cruel heart admits no passion but hatred; and to feed on its scorpions, refuses the endearment of the tenderest sentiment."

"Would to Heaven, cried Affar, I was such as you paint me!"

"Then the charms of Saphira have at last punished me, returned Maana, not how

for

for my treachery towards her, but for my misguided pity towards myself; I dreaded the power of her tears; I hoped in the excess of her despair; I broke her chains, to place within her reach that death she so often invoked. Woe on thee, odious Sahab! by thy unseasonable help, Saphira lives happy, and Maana has lost the comfort of seeing her rival as wretched as herself; or of being, at least, the friend of Affar."

"Be calm, said Affar; if the happiness of Saphira depends on my love for her, the comfort of seeing her wretched remains to you; and if you are satisfied with my friendship, you shall possess it

un-

unrivalled; but attend to the secret I must reveal, and all your doubts will be removed."

"If the beginning of this conversation, pursued Saheb, had excited my curiosity by the interest I took in Saphira, that interest being strengthened by her plain justification, I was more and more desirous to hear how far she could be in need of my protection; for though love may become a crime, generosity remains always a virtue. I then kept a profound silence, and Affar continued thus:"

"Know, dear Maana, that the passionate sentiments you desire from me, I cannot

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cannot grant to a person of your sex; do not start at these words; I am a woman as you are, and infinitely more unhappy than you ever will be, if your fate remains in my friendly hands.

“I was born in the province of Schiraz, at the same birth with a brother, to whom I bore so perfect a resemblance, that, when in the same dress, we could not be distinguished from each other. At the death of my parents, I remained under the care of that brother, who being willing to render the usual retirement of my sex agreeable, permitted me to partake in every instruction he received.

“When

“When, by a continuation of manly exercises, I had acquired strength, without losing beauty, my brother addressed me with the following discourse :

“The time is now come for us both, my beloved Gulrouz, to reap the fruits of your emulation and my indulgence. Though the tree of my life scarcely blossoms, I am already disgusted with the false glittering of courts, and the mock pageantry of the world; I breathe only for a shelter against the storms of society. But, if I rightly judge of your aspiring mind, my example will be of little weight with you. Let then a tender brother explore with yourself the utmost

most recess of your heart : if you think you can avoid feeling the power of love, or resist the allurements of that passion, rendered strong by our weakness alone ; instead of giving you a tyrant under the sacred name of husband, I will procure those enjoyments of life which I suppose are better suited to your dispositions than to mine ; and the price of which will be enhanced by the singularity of your situation. In short, my design is in effect to resign you my wealth, my rank, and all the rights of my sex ; to make you pass for myself, and to retire to some inaccessible wilderness, after having discarded our ancient servants, and told our friends that I have sent you to a remote country."

“ This extraordinary proposition suited too well my inclination and my pride not to be eagerly received; friendship only opposed it; but as my brother could not be stopped by that obstacle, I removed the most powerful one of his fears upon my account. I listened attentively to his advice, and thought they were engraven in my heart, but I soon experienced that my unheeded ambition had deceived me.

“ Every thing took place as we had concerted it, but though not one suspected our secret transaction, I could not, after the departure of my brother, overcome my uneasiness; I thought I saw scrutiny painted on every countenance, and avoid-
ed

ed his deceived friends, who sought for my company. At last, I resolved to quit my native land, and fixed my residence in this capital of Iran, where my known rank and my immense wealth procured me a flattering distinction.

“ Among the youths who courted my intimacy, I found Morad most worthy of it; familiarity soon ripened that rising inclination into love, but so well a disguised love, that for a year (the happiest year of my life) I trod with delight upon the flowers which covered the precipice opening under my feet. Never once, in that time, did the lessons of my brother occur to my mind, for none of the signs

against which he had warned me raised my fears.

Too soon the day dawned, whose fatal light was to chase away the happy repose of my breast; Morad, whose inmost soul I could read, seemed unusually agitated; I asked the cause, with an ominous anxiety, and he confessed his love for Saphira.

“At this unwelcome confidence, the paleness of death overspread my face, and I fainted in the arms of the object of my now-known love, but alas! lost friend! when I recovered, I saw in his surprised looks that my double secret had been re-
vealed

vealed to him; and though he promised religiously to keep that secret, the bitter fruits I reaped from the forced discovery, have made me incessantly lament it.

“ The dew of consolation which fell from the lips of Morad, instead of refreshing, chilled my heart, and his subsequent behaviour drove me to despair. Seeing he avoided my company, and hastened his union with Saphira, I sought for your acquaintance. Your eyes, lovely Maana, misled your heart; you engaged to favour my design in depriving Morad of his beloved Saphira; and I have repaid you by every mark of friendship that could alleviate the disappointment

of your hopes. In the mean time, the unfortunate Gulrouz daily added a grief to her former griefs. You have often wondered at the satisfaction you thought I felt in indulging my pretended hatred against Morad, whilst I suffered the pangs of contemned love. The prison into which I have entrapped and still detain that enemy of my peace, my horror of Saphira, and the ill treatment she has received from me; all these have seemed to you an unnatural cruelty; but if your love excused my conduct, your reason must acquit it.

“Morad knows a secret, which the innocence of Saphira has till now insured, and

and I could not, with safety, restore him his liberty, without securing his heart. Hope, whose powers are interwoven with our being by self-love, attended me every time I visited Morad; and when I quitted him despair followed and directed my steps to my hated rival: his rage excited mine; he was deaf to my sighs, and I shut my ear to *her* complaints.

“Heaven has looked with pity on this scene of exquisite misery, and sent Saheb to drive destruction from this mansion of tears. The amiable virtues, even more than the manly graces of that generous stranger, have changed my

heart; but my new passion is worthy of its new object.

“Saheb, like Morad, has felt the power of Saphira’s charms, and I do not repine at it; he has taught my heart a disinterested love. I used Saphira as an enemy when I disputed with her the affection of Morad; she is become my friend since Saheb adores her, though to be loved by him is the height of my wishes. If it is really an human being who has performed these wonders, happiness is still within my reach; for, your calm silence, dear Maana, proves that peace has resumed her seat in your mind; and therefore I may hope for your friendly

ly

ly assistance in a better design than that by which both you and myself were deceived.

“ Morad has an undoubted right to Saphira; I am the guilty, though unbenefited robber of his treasure; and I must return it to him. Equity alone would induce me to this action, the justice of which cannot be marred by promoting my interest. Take these keys, and by the subterraneous passage whose secret entrance my friendship has entrusted you with, you will be led to the prison, or rather to the *palace* where Morad is confined. The former lords of this castle, considering that asylum

as their last resource against oppressive power, and dangerous envy; have been profuse in its conveniencies and ornaments. Thus you will find that my only cruelty towards Morad was in depriving him of his liberty, or rather in afflicting him with the sight of the hated Gulrouz.

“ Present yourself before him as his deliverer; conduct him to Saphira; bear witness of what he will reveal in regard to my sex; help them to fly instantly from my power, and appear willing to attend them in their flight, in order to screen yourself from my resentment.

“ Mean-

“ Meanwhile, I will observe Saheb with a watchful eye, and keep him from the scene of this transaction. Thus Saphira shall avoid the painful conflict between love and honour; and Saheb, whose virtue so often vanquished his passion for her, will submit to reason. Thus Gulrouz may attain a felicity for which she will easily resign the right she enjoys by concealing her sex; and shall insure yours with all the tenderness of friendship.”

“ And is it really the heart of a woman I must trust? said Maana, with an altered voice?”

“ Feel

“Feel it, if possible, through my bosom, and convince yourself of its sincerity, answered Gulrouz.”

“Die, perfidious wretch, cried Maana; die, and expiate thy crimes and mine.”

“At these words, I rushed upon the furious slave, but the blow was struck. I wrested too late the bloody dagger from her treacherous hand; and she instantly fled, loading me with imprecations.

“I took Gulrouz into my arms, and the dawn of day appearing, I brought her out of the grotto. I was unfolding my turban, in order to stop the stream of
her

her blood, when an hundred armed slaves surrounded me with hideous cries. Maana animated their fury, calling me the murderer of my benevolent host and their kind lord.

“Though I was confounded at the impudence of her accusation, I ceased not my pious office towards Gulrouz, whom they neglected in their blind rage; when I beheld Saphira advancing with a trembling pace: horror and compassion were mixed in her looks. As I hastened to her in order to unravel the odious mystery, notwithstanding the slaves who obstructed my passage, she ordered them to conduct me to the darkest cavern of
the

110 THE VIZIRS, or,

the rock, on which the castle was situated.

“ In vain Maana, who desired my immediate death, opposed that sentence; pity and respect had insured to Saphira almost all hearts, whilst the insolent slave had a very few friends.

“ Thus I was delivered from these hunters of my life; but their blood-thirsty scymitars were less cutting than the words of Saphira.

“ O thou, cried she, who under the mask of honour and generosity, hast concealed thy baseness and wicked designs,

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go from the blushing day, to the former habitation of tygers, whose cruelty thou hast surpassed, and expect the most exquisite torments for thy horrid deed."

"At these insulting reproaches, I exclaimed: The virtuous may be deceived, the innocent may suffer, whilst avenging truth is preparing her thunderbolts against the wretch who has aggravated her bloody guilt by infamous calumny."

"I could say no more, the piercing cries of Maana, and the rumour of the other slaves hindered me from being heard; and by a second order of Saphira I was dragged to the cavern. There I was left,
I should

I should say, in a dreadful solitude, if innocence and submission to the Almighty will, had not remained with me. These two faithful attendants, whose consolations, neither malice nor power can deprive us of, supported my drooping spirits; for the thought of dying branded with infamy would otherwise overcome human fortitude.

“As in my excogitations I pronounced the name of Saphira, I was interrupted by an unknown voice, whose sounds were conveyed to me through the crevices of the rock, and which thus addressed me:

“Haste,

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“Haste, generous Saheb, haste to deliver Morad, and acquire a new friend. Follow the directions of Saphira; and, then our scymitars shall force our passage through the guards of this odious castle, or revenge on the perfidious Gulrouz, the most amiable and most injured of women.”

“Gulrouz is too well punished, answered I; and in vain Saheb would sacrifice his life to deliver Morad, he is himself unjustly confined; for, in a moment given to pity, he has been found unguarded against treachery, and unarmed against force. However, tell me by what

what means I can join you, since we may, being united, recover our liberty.

“The task is very difficult without proper instruments to perform it, returned Morad; but, if propitious heaven support your strength, we shall succeed. Turn to the eastern part of the cavern, there is a trap door, by which we may be led to each other.”

“I confided in the power that Morad had mentioned, and I removed the heavy stone. He was immediately in my arms, but seeing the cavern strongly barred without, he conducted me by a dark winding path to a vast salloon, whose
precious

precious ornaments added refulgency to many lamps of crystal that were suspended from the roof, and exhaled a bright flame with a delicious perfume. We took our places upon a rich sofa, and honour borrowing the openness of antient friendship, we recounted reciprocally the events which had occasioned our fatal meeting.

“ The noble heart of Morad could not refrain from pitying the dreadful fate of Gulrouz ; whilst mine, less generous, felt the pangs of disappointment, when I heard that the secret announced to me by Saphira was not such as my guilty hopes had fancied it.

“ Saphira

“ Saphira being in quest of a favourite dog, lost in the tumult of the preceding day, had entered the cavern ; she had heard the complaints of Morad, in a short conversation, they had revealed to each other the odious mystery of their fate ; and Saphira, with many encomiums bestowed on me, had promised Morad to engage me in his deliverance.

“ When Morad had ended his recital, I exclaimed : And thus the calumny of a base slave has driven Saheb from the glorious light in which Saphira saw him, as a tempest formed from the coarsest exhalations of the earth, drives the eagle from the bright rays of the sun !”

“ Be

“ Be just, replied Morad; consider the virulence of Saphira’s words as the exaggerated expressions of a person, who unused to dissimulation, yet deems it necessary to dissemble. Saphira knowing by me the sex of Gulrouz, and the love of Maana for the pretended Affar, has suspected the truth; but how impossible to undeceive, in an instant, narrow and prejudiced minds. She has seen the bow of danger bent against you, and thought the arrow of her pretended wrath might save you from being reached by those of interested malice and blind zeal. She has sent you to the cavern where I waited for you, in hopes we should force the obstacle that parted us, and make a mutual defence

defence in case she could not openly declare herself for us."

"I receive with transport your generous consolations, said I to Morad; for true friendship forms the best amends for disappointed love; yes, if you suffer me to call you by the sacred name of friend, I swear that even the envied possession of Saphira shall not make me retract what esteem and inclination have pronounced.

"The same sentiments inspire me with the same resolution, returned Morad; but I foresee that the painful tryal must be on my side. I know too well that my rights upon the heart of Saphira were
only

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only founded on filial submission; and I will resign them, if yours, as I presume, are established on sympathy."

"I was going to pour out the effusion of gratitude, when from a voice, too well known, we heard these words:

"Cease your odious contest; neither of you shall possess Saphira. Happiness shall not be the portion of hearts that have not pitied Gulrouz."

"It is Gulrouz herself, exclaimed Morad, drawing back a purple curtain which concealed an open-worked door of polished steel!

"What

“What malignant power, cried I, in my turn, can be permitted to send back the dead from the fatal gulf that part them from us, in order to persecute innocence? No, under the appearance of a dismal vision, we certainly see the true Affar.

“I am the injured man you have named, returned Affar; injured by my own imprudence, in trusting the heart of a woman to itself, when exposed to human perverseness. But as by your confession, which I have heard, the honour of my unfortunate sister has remained untainted, you shall not trample on her fair name, and revel upon her
cold

cold ashes." In saying these words he fled from us and left us in a silent amazement.

"At last Morad said :

"Let us not be idle in this pressing danger; though I have so long sought in vain for the door, by which I entered this place from the adjacent forest, when deceived by a supposed message from Saphira, we may yet be happier in our search, or find some other issue like that of the cavern, which undoubtedly was unknown even to Gulrouz herself. Saphira calls for our protection, as exposed to the revenge of the impetuous Affar."

"Or to his love, added I, with a sigh.

“Animated by these two dreadful prospects, we passed three days in fruitless attempts. The sight of the slave, who, through the iron door, presented us the necessary nourishment, raised and depressed our hopes by turns; but at last we found that he was deaf to our intreaties, as the rock which inclosed us in its womb.

“Morad, who by long frequenting of courts, knew that mercenary hearts cannot be moved either by justice or pity, employed the general corruptor of mankind; he offered gold; but that metal whose inoffensive nature is rendered so pernicious by art, whose brightness allures

to so many dark deeds, lost its efficacy with the obdurate slave. The situation of Saphira remained unknown to us; even our enquiries about the fate of Gulrouz were not answered; for though I had seen death hovering over her head, I could not help indulging a surmise of her recovery.

“Time having, as usual, restored the full power of reason, we rested our hopes and fears in the hands of providence, and endeavoured to cheer up the mournful hours by intellectual communications.

“Morad excelled in the knowledge of the human mind, and I was versed in

speculative sciences: thus we were both instructed, and in turn instructed each other. In the course of my narrations, my narrow escapes from the snares of Zoroaster surprised him more than my rashness in running into them.

“ You judge me with too great a partiality when you excuse my fault, said I, one day to him; it was not that I was insensible of the danger. I knew superstition to be a monster, whose nature is contrary to that of every other ferocious being; for, most dreadful in his birth, he is only contemptible when grown up; as time clinches his murdering claws, and changes the subtle and insinuating

flame

flame he breathes into a noxious repulsing
smoke.

“ And thus you thought, replied Mo-
rad smiling, that this description was an
impervious shield? no, added he, these
strong colourings with which imagination
paints the objects, in fixing our attention
upon them, often enslave the mind,
either by love or fear. Here is the more
candid and less dangerous representation,
drawn by the pencil of Reason. Man
loves novelty, when in the flower of
youth he eagerly pursues and embraces
it; he even grasps at its shadow in the
decline of his life; reflexion is driven off,
prejudice takes its place, and obstinacy

follows. If then persecution rouse the pride of ignorance, the evil has no remedy but in its old date, by which the future generations are saved.

“Our wise king, convinced of these truths, though winking at ancient errors, has shewn himself very adverse to the new tenets of Zoroaster; but instead of arming the hand of power against them, he opposes passion to passion in banishing from his court the disciples of the impostor; for, few of the ambitious will be zealous for a sect to which even the distinction of celebrated punishment is denied. Unhappily for our amiable Saphira, her parents have been of that small
ill-

ill-advised number ; but, if by their submitting to error, they have deprived her of her natural protectors, by your triumphing over it, you have deserved to save that blooming rose from being untimely cropped."

"In these and such like conversations, we passed the time, and a whole month had elapsed; during which, we were making our vain but habitual search into the remotest parts of our prison, when the opening of the iron gate alarmed us. At the unexpected sound, Morad embraced me, and, drawing his scymitar, presented me his dagger, saying:

“Come, my friend, let us dearly sell our innocent blood.”

“With that resolution we went forward; but at the sight of Saphira, who was attended only by two slaves, the dreadful weapons fell from our hands. As our eyes were rivetted on the beautiful face, and our hearts entranced in unspeakable joy, Gulrouz entered the saloon: she shone forth in the usual dress of her sex like the full moon in a serene sky, and was conducted by a venerable man, whom Morad addressed as the father of Saphira.

“Soon

“ Soon after followed Affar, who, advancing towards Morad with a hasty pace and a stern look, said, “ Behold, infatuated Morad, these two virgins, to whom the gifts of nature have been so equally distributed, that the impartial admirers could not chuse between them. The one is the object of thy love, an unrequited love; the other of thy most unjust hatred. Free, in this instant, Saphira from the bond of her promise to thee, and she will be united to Saheb, for whom she has declared her partiality; receive the faith of Gulrouz, whose heart has been steady in its attachment to thee, and only deceived by a too lively esteem for Saheb. If thou re-

fullest this my proposal a perpetual confinement shall be thy doom."

At these words, Morad, with a fury that was strongly marked in his countenance, sought for the scymitar he had dropped; but finding the slaves had carried it off, he became like a lion whose fierceness is redoubled by seeing himself entangled in the toils of the hunter.

"Affar, said he, thy perfidious sister might have spared thee the baseness of these threats. How often has she not bathed with her tears the iron gate which screened her from my resentment; offering to open it on the slightest promise of
that

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that abhorred union thou dar'st to pre-
scribe me; but if for regaining my li-
berty I would not even dissemble an in-
stant, though dissimulation is a just re-
ward for treachery, canst thou think I
will submit to thy cowardly insolence?
no, I prefer captivity and death itself to
Gulrouz; may every audacious woman
prove a fate like her's, and be despised
by the man with whom she dares employ
any other arms than those allowed to her
sex, meekness and modesty. On the con-
trary may happiness be the reward of
Saphira's amiable virtues. I resign her
to Saheb, and if I can join the dear hands
of these two objects of my love and
friendship,

friendship, I defy the severest blow of malice and revenge."

"Morad having spoke thus, with a vehemence that confounded Affar and Gulrouz, he approached Saphira, and seizing her fair hand, was going to join it with mine, when the father of Saphira interposing, said :

"Suspend, my lord, the overflowing of your too hasty and imprudent generosity ; Saheb has an act of justice to perform, before I can consent to his union with Saphira : he must repair the insult he has been guilty of towards the holy Zoroaster, acknowledge the sanctity of his

his doctrine, and embrace his faith, before he pretends to wed her."

"The blushes of indignation covered my face, and announced my answer, when at the appearance of Zoroaster himself, I was struck with a silent astonishment. His aspect wore a dissembled mildness, and an affected affability sat upon his lips.

"I blame your indiscreet zeal," said he, to the father of Saphira; "truth wants not the support of seduction." "I forgive my much respected Saheb a desertion caused by an ingrafted prejudice; and if he will promise to remain with me during six moons, in order that I may convince him,
by

by degrees, of his error, I will bestow on him Saphira this instant, together with the liberty of Morad."

"Here prince Zerir interrupting Saheb, exclaimed:

"How imprudent often is craftiness! how happy you were to possess the idol of your soul, and to procure the liberty of your friend, by a grant which prepared you a new triumph, and a new shame to the impostor."

"Thus I should have thought, replied Saheb, if a just diffidence of myself had not raised the image of my past danger,
against

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against love, pride, and even hallowed friendship; if I had not experienced that the least hesitation in the cause of truth is a treason, the punishment of which is, to be delivered up to falsehood. However (continued he) I confess that the reasons in favour of my desires were so specious, and so strongly urged by persuasive passions, that the anxious conflict lasted some moments. Happily, in the interim, I turned my eyes upon Morad; I saw indignation kindled in his looks against my dishonourable doubtfulness; his generous resolution, when disssembling, would have been less criminal than in my case, presented itself to my mind. Thus animated by the reproof of his

his countenance, as well as encouraged by the example of his virtue, I cried: I refuse thy perfidious offers, O Zoroaster; since even to obtain a virtuous and amiable wife, to preserve a dear and worthy friend, cease to be the greatest blessings, when conscience must pay a shameful price for them. Never, with the consent of my heart, shall these ears again be infected with the poisonous breath of impiety: never shall thy absurd idolatry, thy superstitious fire offend these eyes again.

“And never, interrupted Zoroaster, (now disrobed of his dissimulation, and foaming with rage) shalt thou boast of this

this new insult. Affar, pursued he, receive Saphira from my hands; and, to reward thy zeal for the propagation of the true faith, to which thou hast sacrificed thy love for her, I will admit thy sister to the honour of my bed! We shall celebrate these nuptials on the devoted heads of these two pretended champions of truth.

“ Yes---if they prevent thee not, cried Morad, if righteousness and courage cannot vie with hypocrisy and baseness. In saying this, he rushed upon the slave who was next to him, from whom he took his scymitar, and I followed the example.

“ Affar,

“Assar, with a crowd of slaves, retired some paces from us towards the iron gate, but weakly opposing our fury, when Zoroaster raising his voice, said :

“It is to Thee, O sacred Fire, that I commit the punishment of these blasphemers! deprive them of thy bright emanations, that they may be cast from this moment into everlasting darkness.”

“At these words, a thick vapour diffused itself around us, and extinguished the flame of the lamps; the floor opened under our feet, and we fell, as it were, to the bottom of the rock.

“When

“ When we recovered our senses, we found ourselves half buried in the sand, and in so low a place that we could not stand upright. But we were near each other, and Morad taking hold of my hand, said :

“ How happily the evil mind is ignorant of real good ! To be united, even in death with a friend, to partake the same grave with him, are consolations that the vile and the wicked man never shall know.”

“ Yes, answered I, he cannot conceive that resignation, as well as fortitude, are reciprocally communicated by friendship.

“ As

“As also courage, returned Morad : let us prevent, my dearest Saheb, these dreadful agonies to which we are condemned. Before our reason is obscured, and even our mutual affection chilled by languishing Nature, let our blood, still warm with pure and noble sentiments, be spilt by our own hands; let it arise before the Giver and Disposer of life, against the usurpers of his power.”

“O my friend, replied I, can you confess, and deny at the same time, that mighty Power? if He has not doomed us to die, all the malice of created beings will be impotent against our lives; and who knows, whether in this moment,
the

the legions of Genii that wait for his commands, cut not the trembling air with their swift wings, in order to fly to our assistance? Think, oh! think that submission to heaven is always attended by peace; whilst repentance is the inseparable companion of despair? commit to my care the fatal weapon with which you armed yourself in a just defence; for, though I am convinced it would be blunted by an invisible hand, if it be the sovereign will of Him who reigns above to save you, yet I cannot support even the imagination of its ever being possible for me to be covered with your beloved blood.

“My

“ My grief moved Morad, he yielded to my intreaties, and was soon rewarded for his friendly acquiescence.

“ A door having suddenly opened, Gulrouz, with a flambeau in her hand, presented herself to us.

“ Morad, said she, in return for the liberty I restore thee, of the friend thou hast acquired by the effects of my blind passion, forgive me these excesses which thou justly condemnest. Saheb, receive this testimony of my *gratitude* as well as *justice*.—You weakened the blow, aimed at my heart, and stopped the murdering hand raised against me. If your
humanity

humanity has been ill requited, do not impute me the fault. My brother, who was sent by Zoroaster in pursuit of you, had from me a true account of the fatal accident, and a sincere confession of my crimes ; but false pride, love, and above all, superstition have rendered him unjust. However, fear not for Saphira ; Gulrouz will preserve her usurped boldness, till she has saved every one of those she has injured and exposed ; and will die rather than she will suffer them to become the victims of barbarity."

" In ending these words, Gulrouz conducted us to the forest, by the passage we had so long sought for in vain.

There

There she received our grateful thanks,
and departed.

“We hastened to Herat, from whence Morad sent an intelligent and faithful slave to observe what passed in the castle of Affar. This messenger returned with the welcome news, that Saphira had disappeared with Gulrouz on the night of our deliverance; he added, that Affar who dared not publicly appear as being a declared follower of Zoroaster, had dispatched many slaves in quest of us, suspecting we were with the two fugitives.

“As malice, when constrained by fear,
is more dangerous than when it has a full
scope

scope to exert itself, and may recur to means impossible to foresee; I intreated Morad to quit Herat, and travel with me; but at first I intreated in vain: the fire of resentment was kindled in his heart; and he breathed nothing but a dreadful vengeance.

“ I then availed myself of his generous pride. Our enemies, said I, are too base to expect an honourable satisfaction from them, and our minds are too great for delivering them into the hand of power. Thus we shall remain exposed to undermining treachery, instead of more prudently leaving the evil of corrosive thoughts, and the rage of fruitless at-

tempts to their native soil, the hearts of the wicked; thus we shall lose the hope of ever seeing again Saphira, to whose retreat propitious Fortune (or rather Providence) may still conduct us.

“ I yield, my friend, answered Morad, to your persuasive reasons. The punishment of Zoroaster and Affar would be too dearly bought, if it were to cost us a blush, or to hazard the felicity of protecting the amiable Saphira;—and I may say, the generous Gulrouz;—for the last noble action of that unhappy woman, has re-instated her in the place she had in my heart, when under the name of Affar her modest and sweet conversation acquired

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quired my friendship. Gulrouz is indeed a striking instance, that an elevated soul, though overborne by strong passions, cannot long stoop to baseness, and often, when least expected, shines forth again with re-animated lustre.

“As Locman had ordered me to visit the kingdom of Turan, we bent our course towards it, attended by some chosen slaves; but not without making in our way all possible enquiries after Gulrouz and Saphira.

“Our hope of finding these fair fugitives in the road we had taken was not altogether groundless: Gulrouz might

have wisely supposed that as the contagion of Zoroaster's error was spreading itself througout Iran, she could not but be in danger of meeting with some betrayers in any retreat she should have chosen in that kingdom ; whilst her safety was insured amongst the Turanians, who were very adverse to the pretended prophet of their ancient enemies.

“ Some have considered these national animosities as a fortunate barrier against the interchange of reciprocal vices ; but how can a natural evil produce a real good ? can a serpent be the parent of a dove ? The very name of enemy seems to sharpen the spur of emulation ; but in
the

the generality of mankind that emulation is envy, and usually attaches itself to bad objects as its proper food. Thus, when a nation sees some new vices or follies arising in a rival nation, she first exclaims against them, but soon gives birth to a monster more hideous than that which she has condemned.

“Many instances of this kind have been given in the long and cruel war between the kingdoms of Iran and Turan. However, the two nations were in peace when my friend and I passed the river Gihon.

“No sooner had we entered the immense valley of Mawarannahar than we

found the truth of this sentence: *Let the vultures be in amity with the eagles, and they will turn their talons against themselves.*

“ That delightful valley had no traces of its natural charms: no more its winding rivulets could boast of their clear waters, which enlivened their flowery borders, they were converted into streams of blood: no more its rich soil could exhibit an ever-green and fresh carpet; it was covered with mangled corpses.

“ When we enquired into the cause of this scene of horror, we were told that some rebellious subjects had risen against their sovereign; and that, after many
furious

furious encounters, a decisive battle was actually fighting at a few parasangs from the place in which we were.

“Our youthful hearts panting after glory, we flew towards the field of battle, at which we arrived in the moment that the king’s army was put to the rout, and he himself being furrounded by his enemies was in imminent danger of losing his life or liberty.

“Our scymitars having made us a passage, we ranged ourselves with the few warriors that still defended their sovereign, to whom Morad cried :

H 4

“ Prince,

“Prince, the wings of victory are displayed over your sacred head; the succour from Iran is arrived.”

“At these words, which were confirmed by our unexpected appearance, a sudden terror seized the rebels; and they began to retreat, whilst the faithful subjects, being re-animated, returned to the fight with redoubled courage.

“Morad perceiving the happy success of his artifice, repeated the welcome tidings from rank to rank, and by that means rallying the troops, he led them on with the valour of the celebrated Rostam.

“As

“ As the king was not entirely disengaged from his most inveterate enemies, I fought by his side, and I had three times the fortune of saving him from desperate attempts; but Morad soon came to our rescue, and pursuing his advantage, gained a complete victory. Some of the rebels escaped by flight, but the greatest number of them laying down their arms, implored mercy, and restored the prisoners they had taken, amongst whom was the Vizir that commanded the army.

“ When the king Afrafiab, who went in triumph to the city of Zamin, found that it was only to Morad and myself he owed such a sudden change of fortune,

he took us for supernatural Beings; but when, with the utmost difficulty, we had undeceived him, his gratitude knew no bounds. However, his heart declared a partiality for me; he respected Morad as his benefactor; he loved me as a friend.

The excellent qualities of that prince rendered his royal favour dear to me; a parity of age and sentiments soon produced an intimacy seldom seen between a monarch and a private man. The generous Morad rejoiced at my elevation, which, how pleasing soever to my vanity, intoxicated not my mind. Perhaps, the prepossession of my heart, that sighed for Saphira, saved me from the rock of ambition;

ambition ; perhaps, I was not far enough advanced in life to find that rock as dangerous as it is in the middle of its career. But, as the sweet perfume of flattery was incessantly diffused around me ; as the bright rays of honour encircled my head, I was thought enraptured with my fortune ; and this supposition exposed me to a new trial, but far easier than those I had hitherto sustained.

“ The young queen added to the pride of beauty a pretension to an absolute sway over the mind of her royal consort, who wisely united the compliance due to so tender a connexion, with the firmness becoming a king. He had chosen his
present

present vizir without the participation of the ambitious queen, and as he deemed him worthy of his confidence, he continued him in his place notwithstanding her arts, and without making him answerable for the infelicity of events. But as the mole can form no idea of the eagle's piercing eyes, the darkness of malice cannot conceive the perspicacity of wisdom, and ascribes the most sagacious resolution to the blindness of fancy. Thus the queen imagined that an old prepossession would give way to a new one in the heart of Afrasiab; she saw in the favour I enjoyed, and the desire, which she supposed in me, of an unrivalled power, the means of accomplishing the
ruin

ruin of the vizir; while undoubtedly she was not without hopes of effecting my own destruction in due time.

“ However, as she thought it unsafe to trust me with the secret of her bad design, she sent her favourite to Morad with two commanders in the last rebellion, who affirmed that the vizir had betrayed the king to the rebels, and exposed his sacred person to the danger from which we had delivered him. I was desired to procure an audience for the accusers, to be present at the accusation, and to use my influence towards accelerating the just punishment of the guilty vizir.

“ My

“ My indignation at the coolness with which Morad delivered me this base proposition, and presented me the two calumniators, can be compared to nothing but his surprise at the eagerness with which I accepted the infamous employment.

“ On my request, we were immediately admitted into the royal presence, when I thus addressed the king:

“ Mighty ruler of nations, distributor of Heaven’s blessings, and administrator of his justice, vouchsafe a favourable ear to the prayer of thy servant. Here thou seest prostrate before thy foot-stool two
accusers

accusers of the venerable vizir thou hast chosen in thy wisdom. Let not the luminary thou hast placed on high to conduct thy people, be obscured by the malignant vapours of envy; and if the accusation is not plainly proved, grant me the power of punishing so atrocious an attempt by the most exquisite tortures; but if thy slaves repent before they have sullied the hallowed air thou respirest by the breath of calumny, if they unravel the mystery of iniquity, break not these weak instruments of malice."

"As the king nodded his assent, I turned to the trembling wretches, (who instead of finding in me a supporter as they

they had been flattered with, found a severe judge, and said to them : Speak boldly the truth before your sovereign, the living image of *Him* who is truth itself, and pronounce your own doom.

“ These words were not answered, and the countenance of the vile accusers betraying their guilt, the king bade us retire, chusing to hear them in private, after they had been secured by heavy chains.

“ Meanwhile, Morad approached me with some confusion for the transient doubt he had entertained of my sentiments, and embraced me with the transport

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sport of a friend who rejoices in a good action of his beloved.

“ Soon after, I was ordered to attend the king: I found him alone, and reclined on his sofa; his suppressed sighs declared a mighty conflict in his breast; the irresolution of an agitated mind was painted in his looks. As I remained before him absorbed in a silent grief, his face brightened, and, presenting his hand to me, he said:

“ Oh! have I then yet a claim to happiness? has not the fatal incumbrance of royalty bereaved me of a true friend? Come, dearest Saheb, let us remove the
mock

mock distance that powerful pride and weak meanness have put between man and man; equality is the basis of a reciprocal confidence; and what can make amends for that comfort? surely it is not the summit of grandeur, which is furrounded by the black croud of anxieties and troubles, as the inaccessible mountains are haunted by the race of evil genii. But once more let us forget the wretched situation: Sit by me, and attend to my woes.

“Thou knowest the ferocity of the people that I am obliged to call mine. These blood-thirsty men cannot live but in contentions and broils either at home
or

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or abroad. It is certain that my predecessors have often declared unjust wars against the neighbouring princes, in order to save themselves from the turbulence of their subjects. But, far be it from me to make use of so criminal a policy. If Providence has been pleased to place me under a contagious atmosphere, have I the right of corrupting the purer air breathed by those who have received a better lot? No, though in the few years of my reign, the monster rebellion has many times opened its dreadful jaws to devour me, as I have found no just reasons to attack my neighbours, I have not robbed them of the sweet repose of peace, because I could not enjoy it myself.

“When

“ When I ascended the throne, I devoted my person to the happiness of my people, and even my life to their injustice, rather than to become unjust myself; but it was not without reluctance that I made the sacrifice; I would have deserted my station, and nothing but the remonstrances of Locman obliged me to submit to the will of Heaven.

“ The repeated victories of Kaïkhusru had daunted the Turanians, and they had gratefully received the peace that the virtuous Lohorab had granted them; they respected my hoary father, who had so long struggled against fortune and his
own

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own inclination, in order to satisfy their odious passion for war.

“ Though the tender plant of my life had been reared in the rugged field of contention, and had been watered with streams of blood, yet the blossoms of my desires thirsted after the dew of knowledge. To learn how to *support* mankind, seemed to me far preferable to the skill of *destroying* them.

“ I opened my heart to the same excellent man whose virtues thou hast saved from being blasted by malice. He had led me on to many achievements of valour; he offered to conduct me to the fountain.

fountain of wisdom, to the sage Locman.

“The unusual tranquility which my royal father enjoyed, rendered him favourable to my desire, but his consent was granted only on condition that I should keep myself unknown amongst his late enemies.

“In order to obey this injunction, I undertook so long a journey only with my conductor, and a few slaves; and in traversing the kingdom of Iran, I took care to avoid its principal cities.

“As I arrived in Yemen before the time appointed for the trial of the Labyrinth,

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byrinth, I stayed in the palace of Locman, and became enamoured with a private life. To hear the sage, to meditate upon his words, were satisfactions for which the fancied enjoyments of power could not make me amends. But when I was told that the Genii had given the celebrated garden of Irem* into the custody of Locman, and that he might gratify me with the happiness of passing my life in that delightful abode, I was inflamed with the thought of such a felicity, and made it my wish, when, as usual, I was bidden to form one.

“ A

* The earthly paradise of the Asiatics, supposed to have been planted by the Genii, at the request of King Sheddad.

“A severe look, which, however, was mitigated by a smile of compassion, announced me the repulse of Locman, who spoke thus :

“Prince, I should bewail your destiny if what Heaven has decreed were not always the best. A contemplative life is not your lot. Your father has left the busy scene of this world, and you must fill his place in the high station of a king. Be faithful to the great trust reposed in you ; let justice and clemency direct equally your steps through the thorny paths you must tread, and they will conduct you to bowers of quiet and delight, far above those of Irem, which, however,

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ever, I grant only as a reward of approved virtues."

"These words caused me an inexpressible grief; with the tears of filial love I mixed those I owed to myself in considering that I was to enter the career in which my father had found so few resting places. In the bitterness of my heart, I exclaimed: Oh! can the Supreme Being, who knows how difficult it is for a man to rule himself, ordain him to be the ruler of others? does Royalty come from divine institution?"

"No, answered Locman; for reason was intended to be the natural governor

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of

of mankind, and cannot mislead us when joined with the consciousness that the almighty sees our actions. But as the generality of men have rejected these two unerring guides, they have been left to the government of their passions, by which they found themselves dragged with heavy chains after blind tyrants, instead of chearfully following the tracts of enlightened conductors. However, sometimes Providence places upon the throne a man endowed with wisdom; and who is he that in refusing to be the instrument of Heaven's mercies can hope mercy for himself? Return then to your kingdom, and instead of wishing for an exemption from troubles, wish to have the fortitude
of

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of supporting them. But before you depart, receive, O prince, the assurance of my regard, and of every assistance I can be enabled to give you.

“It was on the strength of these promises, dear Saheb, that I took you and your friend Morad for two Genii sent by the sage; especially as I remembered to have seen you amongst the youths, who, like stars, brightened the serene sky of his court, and who are thought to be as many celestial powers.

“The acclamations with which I was received by my subjects, removed not the oppression of my heart; I knew too

well that the multitude are always enraptured with a change; but I was no more to consider the *dangers* of my station, its *duties* were to be the sole objects of my attention.

“ Though I had no prospect of happiness, I indulged the thought of finding some comfort in domestic privacy; but even this was rendered almost impossible by my fatal elevation; the choice of a consort was more difficult for me than for the meanest of my subjects.

“ I knew that my command, like the power of the vernal sun, would have filled the garden of my pleasures with the
flowers

flowers of beauty; but the rose soon fades, and the enamoured nightingale * finds only thorns where he expects delight.

“As to the accomplishments of the mind, which are the source of connubial felicity; can a king explore the heart of a timid or an artful woman?—he, who is debarred of social freedom;—when that task is so difficult even to those who, by equality of rank, are permitted to enjoy a familiar intercourse. Much less can he trust those base courtiers who surround his throne, and whose words are framed of servility, flattery, and deceit.

I 3

“Such

* The Asiatics suppose that the nightingale is the lover of the rose.

“Such were my reflexions, such were my anxieties ; but alas ! it happened to me as to a man who, being placed on the brink of an high precipice, looks with dread around himself, till giddy at the sight of the encircling dangers, he falls headlong into the most profound abyfs.

“The unhappy necessity of war had compelled my father to dispossess the king of Khoten, his vassal, and to give his throne to a prince of the same blood, who had proved a more useful friend ; but soon the Khotenians rebelled against the usurper, who retired to Turan. My father received him with a royal distinction, and poured the streams of liberality

on

on his head, but refused to support him against a people whose only offence was to be faithful to their natural king.

“The discontented prince reserved the commission of such an injustice to my unexperienced years, for which he prepared a snare that has involved me in such kind of troubles and disquiets as are much more felt by a sensible heart than the heaviest blows of fortune.

“While my mind was agitated with the waves of undetermination, in regard to to the subject I have mentioned, this prince invited me to a magnificent entertainment he had prepared in a sumptuous

palace, situated on the banks of the Gihon.

“ In the heat of mirth and festivity, when the circling cup had exhilarated my spirits and obscured my reason, the crafty prince fell prostrate before me, and said :

“ Here, O mighty king, thou seest at thy feet a faithful servant, who at last is enabled to shew his gratitude for the favours he has received from thy royal father and from thyself.—I have treasured up a jewel of an inestimable value, which I am ready to deliver into thy hands, if thou vouchsafest that I may conduct thee to the place where I carefully keep it concealed from every eye, and only reserved it for thine.

“ This

“ This surprising address having raised my curiosity, I bade my attendants remain in the banquet room, and I followed the prince to a delightful bower planted in the remotest part of his garden. There I found a young damsel, whose beauty was above description. She was seated on a bed of violets and hyacinths, but the soft lustre of her eyes, the graceful turn of her waving curls, sullied the boasted charms of those flowers: the stately tulip and the proud lily bent their heads before her, as confessing that the colours of her cheeks were far superior to their own lively hues: the rose and the jasmine twining around, seemed

178 THE VIZIRS, OR,

to contend which should approach nearest
her perfumed lips, and her snowy bosom.

“At the unexpected ravishing sight,
I remained in a silent extasy, till the
blushing maid, endeavouring to cover
her heavenly face with her hands, the
prince cried:

“Forbear, my dearest daughter! Behold
the amiable sovereign to whom thou hast
vowed the affection of thy heart; let him
view thee with a favourable eye! and
thou, O my liege, accept this my offer-
ing; a wife is the most precious gem, when
her mind is fraught with as many virtues,
as her person is adorned with charms.

“ Oh!

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“Oh! this is a welcome, a thousand times welcome gift, exclaimed I; without being able to pronounce but these words, whilst I took the kneeling fair into my arms. What followed after was entirely the dictate of extravagant transports and blind love. Far from restraining the impatience of my desires, I abhorred the thought of delaying a moment my fancied happiness; the marriage-rites were instantly performed, and my intoxication reached its last period.

“When reflexion succeeded to raptures, I became a striking instance how soon reason is biaffed by unusual pleasures; I condemned not the precipitancy of my conduct,

duct, though so opposite to my former resolutions ; I ascribed it to unavoidable fate, and was contented with my lot.

“ These sentiments received not any alteration, till at the death of my father’s old vizir, I raised Neriman to his place. As I was elated with the thought of thus having done justice to my friend as well as to my people, I hastened to my queen, in order to communicate my satisfaction to so dear a partner of my heart ; but how great was my surprise, when, bursting into tears, she reproached me for want of love and esteem, in not having consulted her on the occasion.

“ Though

“ Though amazed and justly offended at her audacious pretension, I soothed her grief; and my indulgence exposed me to new blushes for the imprudence of an union in which I had so unworthily yielded to the seduction of my senses. At last she made openly the long meditated request in behalf of her father, and notwithstanding the stern repulse she then received, has continued ever since her importunities on that head; sometimes flattering herself that the breeze of tender entreaties will cool my ardour for justice; sometimes that the hurricanes of her passion will stagger my firmness.

“ However,

“ However, I excused these trespasses on the account of filial love; but what can atone for the crime of framing atrocious calumnies, of ensnaring my subjects in the web of interest, in order to support her own iniquity?

“ Though I have so long suffered acute pains from a sting which I supposed to be that of an honeyed bee, must I continue to expose myself when I discovered it was the dart of a poisonous scorpion. But how can I conceal my shame from the hundred eyes of malevolence, which are fixed on my actions? how can I ensure the secrecy of these men, who have proved to me that the infamous plot comes from the evil mind

I had

I had too many reasons to suspect? how can I punish the culpable? and alas! how can I even part with her?

“O Saheb, thou knowest the duty of a king, and the weakness of a man; be a faithful adviser and a compassionate friend; partake with me the burthen of affliction, under which my fortitude stoops; reconcile my contending thoughts in which my reason wanders notwithstanding the righteousness of my intentions.”

“Yes, truly great, and virtuous king, said I, thou mayest command the zeal of thy servant; and be assured that the heart of thy *Saheb* is oppressed with thy grief.

But,

But, in order to answer the trust thou hast been pleased to repose in me, let me first expostulate with thee on the bitterness of thy self-accusation.

“Who is he, that could have stood in the slippery path in which thou hast fallen? and oh! who is he, that being overcome by love, could have arisen to defend the cause of justice. Thy frailty has shewn thy strength; and if the vitiated eyes of mankind were not always magnifying faults and diminishing virtues, thou shouldest be the object of universal admiration.

“But we shall not trust to such perverse judges the secret transaction of this day;

I will

I will persuade the two men, who can divulge the first real crime of thy queen, to quit thy kingdom. Do not add to the misery of thy rank by cropping so hastily the beautiful flower of thy tenderest affections. The gardener endeavours to extirpate the worm who corrodes the root of a fine plant, before he condemns it to the sickle. The detection of an evil design fills with shame the heart which is not entirely corrupted; and remorse is a beaten road to virtue.

“ At last, replied the king, thy gentle method must be first employed; for convinced by my present experience of the truth of thy word, I acknowledge that
the

the goodness of a foil is better tried by a penetrating dew than by an overwhelming shower.

“A few days after this conversation, Afrasiab, who had recovered his usual chearfulness, ordered the preparations for the festival of the Nurouz to be made. He decreed me the honour of leading the youths who were to signalize themselves by many noble exercises; and made me the royal present of a dress embroidered with gems, and an armour wrought with gold.

“This pageantry was too much the taste of my age for me not to be enraptured with

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with the flattering distinction and the shining baubles, but the triumph of my vanity was compleat, when on the morning of the festival, the queen sent me a beautiful Arabian horse, whose trappings were set with rubies and emeralds of an immense value.

“ The slave, who presented me the noble gift, whispered in my ear, that it was the tribute of gratitude. I understood easily the meaning of these words, and I bowed my respectful thanks; whilst my childish joy excited a smile upon the cheek of Morad, who, however, partook sincerely of my satisfaction.

“ At

“ At last, being magnificently arrayed, I was preparing to hasten my courser with the spurs of impatience, and advancing to take hold of his bridle, when Firouzkah, an ancient servant of Locman, to whom the care of my early years had been entrusted, stopped my hand, and said :

“ The sage Locman ordains you to quit instantly the kingdom of Turan, and to follow me. As I have suitable garments for you, and steeds swift as the wind itself, you have no need to tarry for any conveniencies; and you know that obedience ought never to look back.”

1A ”

“ Morad

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“Morad, having heard these commands, and seen in my looks my acquiescence to them, cried :

“Surely the excellent Locman has not raised the sword of separation between Saheb and Morad ?”

“The company of such a friend as Morad cannot be forbidden, answered Firouzkah, who immediately walked on. We followed him, having, by his advice, bade our slaves, who had mean while kept at a distance, to await our farther orders.

“Thus we quitted the city of Zamin, and having reached the river Gihon, entered

tered a boat which was prepared for us. There Firouzkah said, I must return to the court of Afrasiab; wait for me on the other side of the river.

“ I must confess that my submission was not without merit; however, the most painful sentiment of my heart was not caused by the loss of those honours and pleasures I was so much delighted with, and so near to enjoy; but by the thought of my apparent ingratitude towards Afrasiab.

“ Morad, with whom I endeavoured not to suppress my sighs, was incessantly exhorting me to trust in the wisdom of
Locman,

Locman, when my complaints of its severity were changed into thanks and admiration.

“ Firouzkah, who returned with our slaves, told us that the horse which the queen had sent me, had his bridle and saddle impregnated with so subtle a poison, that its effect was almost instantaneous death.

“ This, added he, was the revenge she meditated against you for having occasioned the detection of her attempt against the Vizir; this was her pretended gratitude for the advice you gave to the king in her behalf, the error of which providence permitted, as it often orders
things

things to pass, by which the wicked entangles himself in the toils he has spread for others. In effect, the prince her brother, the only hope of her family, and her own idol, being ignorant of his sister's evil design, and not finding you at the appointed place, mounted the fatal courser, which just carried him to expire before the queen, whose despair, after having revealed the odious secret, has saved the unfortunate king from the horror of pronouncing himself her just doom.

“Am I then, said I, permitted to return to Turan, in order to pour the balm
of

of friendship into the wounded heart of Afrasiab?

"No," answered Firouzkah; "Afrasiab must find his consolation by the strength of his reason, and in the justice of Heaven's decrees, which punishes him for having sought his comfort in the delirium of passion."

"As to you, in coming back to Yemen, you may visit the principal cities of Parsistan, and continue your enquiries after Saphira. In the mean while I will return to the sage, and let him know that I have fulfilled his commands."

“The words of Firouzkah persuaded me that Locman approved my love for Saphira, and pointed me a near prospect of happiness. Morad shared in these reviving hopes; for the pleasures of the Turanian court had not made us remiss in our search after the two wandering beauties.

“We repaired to Herat, in order to know by the slaves of Morad if any thing had happened that might direct our first course. There, we were told that the castle of Affar had been consumed by a sudden eruption of the idolatrous fire, which was incessantly kept burning in it; and

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and that since neither Assar or Zoroaster were heard of.

“After we had prepared every thing necessary for our journey, we set out for Yemen; and in traversing the vast desert of Noubendigan, which parts Khorasan from Parsistan, and in its extent borders so many fine kingdoms; we accidentally strayed from the beaten path, and found ourselves benighted in a maze of entangled woods. We resolved to wait in that place till the bright eye of the sun should explore the tremendous gloominess; and took shelter under some trees whose spreading branches seemed

to draw a wavy curtain between the sky and the earth.

“ Our slaves being spent with the fatigue of the day, and depending on us for the care of the morrow, after having spread the travelling carpets, retired to rest.

“ As prudence bade us to be watchful, lest some ferocious animal, finding his haunt usurped, should have rushed in upon us, and taken us unawares; for some time we resisted the power of sleep, but the stillness of the night, which was only broken by the gentle rustling of the innumerable leafy boughs, and the coolness

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ness of the morning diffused an irresistible languor thro' our veins, and closed our eyes.

“Morad enjoyed an undisturbed repose, whilst the hopes and fears of love having raised in my mind the misshapen fancies of alarming dreams, my senses were painfully recalled to their usual functions. The twilight which then appeared in our thick-shaddowed grove, made me think that the morning had already expanded its rays over the broad azure of the sky. I arose in order to examine if our drear abode could not lead us to some known tracks; when, in my wandering search, I espied a woman, who,

K 3

crossing

crossing hastily a bosky bourn, was coming towards me. I hastened to meet her; but oh! can I express the raptures that my heart felt when I found it was Saphira, my ever loved, and incessantly lamented Saphira, who, without the envious cloud of a veil, shone brighter than the morning star!!

“She seemed no less transported than myself at our unexpected re-union; but I approached her with stretched arms, she checked the overflowings of my love and joy by a modest and mournful though tender look, beckoning me to follow her in silence. As I flew with the wings of desire after her printless steps, we soon reached

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reached a little plat of rising ground, which was fenced in a semicircle by an high and close thicket, and faced by a large arbour, the peace of which seemed secured by a triple range of bended trees, and pliant-tufted boughs.

“The queen of beauty having seated herself upon the velvet cowslips and daisies, I fell at her feet, and exclaimed ;

“Oh ! speak, speak to me, thou idol of my heart ; lest I take this happiness for a celestial vision, sent to me by the hospitable genius of this wood ; lest the fear of losing the ravishing sight hurries my fleeting soul. Open thy love-

K 4

breathing

breathing lips, and assure me thou art really my Saphira.

“Yes, dear Saheb, answered she, I am thine for ever; I am the same unfortunate maid whom thou hast saved from untimely death, and whose helpless innocence thou camest now so opportunely to protect. But, how can I complain of my fate, when I am rejoined to my beloved, to part no more; for surely it is the Sage Locman who has directed thy steps to this inmost recess of gloomy shades. Oh! confirm my hopes; tell me whether he approves our love, and does not reject the daughter of a deceived man,

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man, who has unhappily ended a series of bright days in the dark night of error.

“ While Saphira spoke thus, I printed numberless kisses on the hand she had presented me ; and being robbed of myself in a sweet madness, reflected not on my unbecoming silence ; but having fixed my eyes on her blushing face, and seen anxiety in her looks, I resigned, with a sigh, the intoxicating delight of her touch, and seating myself by her, said :

“ Forgive me, fair lily of unblemished purity, and doubt not that Locman will crown my perfect love with the wreaths of thy heavenly charms. It is by his un-

seen protection that I have been led to thee, and thou shalt find in him a second father.

“ What has happened to me since I was severed from thee till this happy moment, cannot now be present to my enraptured mind; therefore, haste to let me know by what strange accident I found thee in this lonely place, and if I have yet any obstacle to surmount, in taking away my recovered treasure.

“ I need not mention, returned Saphira, the many assaults of poignant grief I have felt in the castle of Assar; thy sympathising heart has, undoubtedly, given

given thee the dismal account of them. As to the catastrophe which Zoroaster had prepared in case thy virtue should resist the temptation he offered, Heaven befriended me enough to save me the horror of seeing it; for I had lost the use of my senses from the instant thou rushedst amidst thy enemies.

“ The amiable Gulrouz, whose friendly cares had, at last, recalled me to life, told me of the horrid death from which she had saved thee and Morad. She recounted how Zoroaster had made use of the contrivance, which the first owners of the castle had formed for disappearing suddenly; and how, by the opening of
the

the roof, one of his confidants had introduced the sulphureous composition which had filled the room with a dim vapour.

“My hatred of the impostor could not be encreased, but now my contempt for him equalled it. In these dispositions which were heightened by my affection for thee, I embraced with joy the proposal of Gularouz, of immediately leaving the castle, and trusting myself to the protection that the sex she assumed enabled her to give me. Her past conduct, instead of making me doubt her sincerity, fixed my confidence; for a passionate mind can seldom harbour cold deceit. The guilt of disobedience towards my father
could

could alone have made me hesitate, if I had supposed it; but as the power of a parent cannot absolve us of a crime against Heaven, it cannot extend to oblige us to it.

“ While Zoroaster and Assar were ruminating upon the past scenes, and preparing those which were to follow; a servant, who had watched their motions, when Gulrouz went to deliver you, helped us also in our flight; and as Gulrouz had saved his family from destruction, we trusted to his zeal and gratitude.

“ He conducted us to one of his friends, who, having distinguished himself

self in the last war, had been made commander of a strong hold; wisely advising us not to quit Khorasan, till an useless pursuit should have cooled the rage of our persecutors.

“When we thought the danger to be entirely over, we prepared ourselves for executing our meditated design of retiring to Yemen, and reclaiming the protection of Locman. Gulrouz bought many slaves to attend and defend us in so long a journey; the end of which, by its happy prospect, filled our hearts with cheerfulness and hopes; for, besides the content which every one breathes in the palace

palace of the sage, we expected there to hear of you and Morad.

“ We had scarcely entered this desert, when we were attacked by Affar with a crowd of his slaves, and by Ardevan, one of the vilest of men, an intimate friend of Zoroaster.

“ As Affar cried to his sister to surrender herself, she generously replied ;

“ I would willingly obey that command, if I alone were concerned in it ; not for the right you have to make it, so much as for the not exposing your life ; but I must protect helpless innocence, and
in

in its defence use the advantages by which my own has been exposed.

“The actions of Gulrouz corresponded to her words; she fought with a valour, that our enemies, notwithstanding their great number, could hardly resist; whilst I, being seated on the sand, and at a little distance, admired, and shuddered at her courage.

“Though Affar ardently desired to get us into his possession, he spared his sister, turning the cutting edge of his scymitar against our slaves; when one of his blows missing its aim, he unhappily wounded her.

“No

"No sooner he saw that dear blood flowing in a crimson stream, than, with distraction in his looks, he commanded his slaves to desist, and precipitately retired with them, being followed by the base Ardevan.

"It was in vain that I intreated Gulrouz to return to the nearest city, her anxieties on my account would scarcely allow me to wrap her wound with my veil, and one of my father's wounded slaves much increased her fears.

"He told us of the fatal accident which had destroyed the castle of Affar, and had obliged Zoroaster to fly from
Khorasan,

Khorasan, in order to avoid the fury of the people; he added that we had been seen by Ardevan, to whom, and to Assar, Zoroaster had given orders to retake us, as being against the dignity he assumed, for himself to pursue two women.

“And where is my father, exclaimed I?

“Where I shall soon meet him, replied the wounded slave; and where I beseech Heaven that I may not find we have been deceived by treacherous arts; for this dreadful uncertainty was expressed in the affrighted looks of my dear master, when yesterday Zoroaster closed his eyes, and

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and wished him that everlasting peace, which, alas! is so much doubtful.

“ These words like a thunderbolt having almost crushed my existence, Gulsrouz ordered the faithful servant, whom Heaven in pity to us had preserved, to take me on his horse, and to follow her. She led us thro’ the most trackless parts of this desert, in order to escape from a new pursuit; for, of our numerous slaves, two only had remained to us, many of them having perished in the fight, and the others ran away with our camels.

“ We were in that deplorable condition, and the spirits of Gulsrouz had begun

begun to forsake her, when we discovered this asylum; the commodiousness of which, as well as the provisions we found in it, convinced us that not long ago it had been inhabited.

“My duty towards my friend recalled me to myself, but my tender cares availed her not; her wound presented a livid hue to my mournful eyes; a raging fever inflamed her blood; and all the symptoms of her approaching dissolution offered themselves to my distressed mind.

“At last, I ordered our trusty servant to go to the neighbouring habitations in quest of a skilful physician. But, though he

he departed only last night, my grief, at the encreasing danger of Gulrouz, having robbed me of rest, I arose early this morning, and unconcerned for my own safety, was running through the wood, as if the spur of impatience could hasten a wished-for moment.

“ When I perceived thee at some distance, I doubted not, but it was him, the return of whom I thus ardently desired ; and oh ! how much above my expectations it has proved to be so, witness my overflowing joy at our providential meeting.

“ However, even in that instant of transporting love, fear and sorrow could
not

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not be dispossessed from my devoted heart; for I had just then heard the noise of horses, and the voice of men, by which I apprehended the threatening approach of enemies. As to Gulrouz, the generous Gulrouz, dying for my sake, what can erase such an image from a grateful mind?

“In saying these words, the amiable tears of sensibility besprinkled the cheeks of Saphira, as the purest dew of a bright morning besprinkles the lively-coloured rose; in vain the ardent sun of my love longed to sip the precious drops, for the cloud of respect interposed.

“As

“As the female slave who attended Gulrouz had told us that the balmy wings of sleep yet hovered over the languishing fair; we continued for many swift hours in the mutual bliss of meeting souls. But too soon I found that when in the instant of heart-felt happiness, we accuse the time of flying rapidly away, it often proves that it has lasted enough to raise the dark structure of misfortune.

“No sooner I entered the silent and gloomy cell in which Gulrouz was stretched on a bed composed of the spoils of wild beasts, than the wounded damsel,

fel, endeavouring to raise her feeble voice; addressed me thus:

“ Draw near, amiable Saheb, and receive thy Saphira from that hand whose sinews tremble at the approach of death; but which have had strength enough to acquit my word to thee in preserving thy beloved. Reward my friendship; and even the fulfilling of my duty, in letting me hear that Morad is happy; for surely thou hast not forsaken him in an unfortunate or doubtful situation.

“ These words filled me with a confusion, which was redoubled, when having told Gulrouz of the time and place in which I had left Morad, she exclaimed:

“ O mighty

“O mighty passion of love! if the firm oak of wisdom bends under thy powerful breath, who can wonder at the weak reed’s being crushed by it! however, friendship is not destitute of arms against thee! witness the generous man, who is now left involved in dangers by the friend he has preferred to thy allurements!

“Yes, Saheb, pursued she, more calmly, the allowable transport of thy love, in recovering the excellent Saphira, does not excuse so many hours of ungrateful forgetfulness; oh! think only of the excruciating fears of Morad on thy account, and judge thyself.

“What can oppose a candid mind to just reproofs?---- I spoke not, ---

but immediately quitted the harbour, and could hardly be stopped by Saphira, who intreated me to take the scymitar of Gulrouz, for I had left mine behind, when I softly stole away from the side of Morad.

“The scourge of remorse drove me to a deserved punishment, and I soon met it. In approaching the ominous place I had quitted in the morning, I called loudly upon Morad; but a dead silence reigned around me, and increased my anxious doubts, till they were lost in a direful certainty.

“The corsees of our slaves, mixed with those of men unknown to me, strewed the unharbouring ground, whose arid sand was drenched in blood. At the blasting
ing

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ing flight, a dim despair spread a new shade of darkness before my eyes; for a while I stood motionless; and, at last, fell by the side of one of our slaves, whose deep groans awakened my senses; and who, grasping my hand, said in a faltering voice :

“ O whither, whither, my lord, art thou come ! — fly to deliver thy friend :--- we have fought against the impious Zo-roaster; --- Assar---Morad is wounded — and---taken away.

“ In ending these broken words, he expired. I blessed his departing soul for these tidings of comfort, for such they were to me, since, as Morad was not yet

numbered amongst the dead, I could
 rescue him or die with him.

“ Though the precipice of wretched-
 ness appears dreadfully steep to those,
 who look down from its brink, it may be
 descended by degrees, which make so
 many resting places to the unfortunate who
 have a nearer prospect of the horrid abyss.

“ Thus, I breathed some hopes, before
 to fall deeper in overwhelming misery.
 Thus, I quitted to the wild beast the
 hateful haunt that the fury of men had
 so plentifully stored for them. I followed
 a trace of blood till night made me lose
 the sight of such a dismal guide, which
 I found no more, when after a forced and
 restless

restless inaction I renewed my course at the return of the day.

“The sun was declining to the west, when being spent with so many hours of inexpressible grief, and overcoming fatigue, I discovered, not far from me, the harbour of Saphira.

“In my surprise, I considered not that having been deceived by the intricate windings of the wood I had trod again the same paths; and, according to the bent of the human mind, which adapts every unforeseen event to its desires, I took this accident for a particular direction of providence, as Gulrouz might be dead, and Saphira in more need of my assistance than Morad, whose tracks I had so fatally lost.

“These

“ These thoughts having re-animated my spirits, I flew towards the harbour, but can I express the terror that seized my heart, when I saw the enclosing thicket broke down, and the feet of horses printed on the late flowery plat.

“ With trembling steps I entered the inmost recess; and, there finding, instead of Gulrouz and Saphira, a part of their garments spread on the ground, my soul recoiled at the horror which awaited her; and my body seemed to have, at last, re-joined, for ever, its parent earth!”—

Saheb paused in this part of his narration, as a man who breathes after a painful struggle; whilst Zerir expressed his sympathising emotion by his repeated sighs.

At

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At that instant a messenger of the Sage was announced, and introduced by the order of Saheb : at his sight, the cheeks of Zerir were inflamed with resentment, and he cried :

“ Art thou not the insolent slave, that in the palace of Locman deridest my anger, and in the pursuit of whom I have exposed my beloved brother and my life.”

“ Yes, prince, answered the slave ; I am he in whose person thou hast violated the laws of hospitality. However, as I am not now compelled to answer thy rash questions, I will tell thee, that too soon for thy glory and peace, thou shalt find the princess Perisadeh.”

“ What

"What means the caitif?" exclaimed Zerir, but he said no more; a look of Saheb awed him into silence, and he retired to his apartment.

- Thus an impetuous mind may be curbed by the power of example; but he, who gives the instruction, ought, like Saheb, to have felt the strongest influence of passions, in order to enhance the price of virtue; for the cold description of unexperienced dangers cannot awake prudence in the breast of inconsiderate youth.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.